

Soliloquies Divine;

The sole-talke of the Soule:

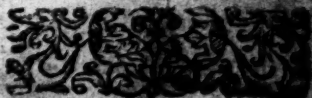
OR

A spirituall and heauenly Dialogue,
berwixt the Soule of
Man and God.

Which, for the great affinitie it
hath with other books of the Au-
thor published heretofore in
our native tongue, is
now entituled

{ *The fourth booke of the* }
{ *Imitation of Christ.* } }

Translated and corrected by
THOMAS ROGERS.



L O N D O N,
Printed by *H. Lownes*, and *R. Tong.*
1628.

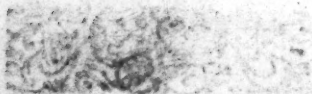
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The fourth book of the
Journey of Christ

Translated and corrected by
J. H. MOORE



Printed by W. B. E. & Co.
1888



To the Christian
Reader.

Being much
and earnestly
requested here-
unto, I haue
published in
our vulgar tongue another of
Malleolus, alias T. de Kem-
pis, or Kempisius works: not
that (I confess) which of some
well weening, though not so
well deeming persons was co-
mended vnto me, I mean that
in the old English translati-
on, and in some Latine copies
too, called The fourth book
of the Imitation of Christ,
A 3 which

To the Reader.

which indeede is altogether
De sacramento altaris, and
so intituled: but the next to
that in Kempisius workes,
namely, the Soliloquium a-
nimæ. This I have termed,
for the great affinitie it hath
with the books of Kempisius
by mee heretofore divulged,
The fourth book of the I-
mitation of Christ.

In the doing whereof, I
have as little as might be va-
ried from the Authors words
and phrases, and no where
from the sense, but where
himselfe hath varied from
the truth of God, and, I doubt
not, would have redressed,
had he lived in these daies of
light, as he did in the time of
most palpable blindness.

And

And

And

To the Reader.

And this haue I done with the greater alacrity, because I finde (and thou maist read it also in the Authors owne Preface) that hee not only doubted that he might utter some things both fond and offensive, but also wished to haue some godly corrector of his faults, and praied vnto Almighty God graciously to reueale such things offensive, either vnto himselfe, or vnto some other.

whose godly prayer, God hath heard, and disconered those things for thy benefit, and testification, beside how Kempisius, the Author, howsoeuer liuing in a popish time, was yet in heart no Papist, but would like well of that which

To the Reader.

is done, as I trust thou wilt,
whose edifying, and spirituall
comforting, I haue onely
aymed at.

And reaping this comfort
to thy soule, by the reading
or hearing of this Treatise, be
thankfull vnto thy God that
giueth thee some taste of the
celestiall ioyes in this misera-
ble & all-troublesome world:
to whose gracious protection,
I doe most humbly commend
thee and my selfe.

The

THE AVTHORS

Preface.

I Have gathered together into a little book for my comforts sake, certaine deuout sentences, the better so to commit them to memorie; I haue also disposed them as into a pleasant Orchard, set out with all sorts of trees, & beautified with all varieties of goodly flowers, wherinto I might now & then enter, both for to claime & behold at my neede such matter as my heart desires for the refreshing of the minde griued at any time, and ouerwhelmed with pensiuenesse.

Now the more cleerly, and readily to finde vnder which arbor I might repose my selfe, or which flowre were best to be culled out, I haue made the heads

The Authors Preface.

heads of euerie Chapter to glitter(as it were)with red titles,I haue likewise with variety of words, as now talking, now reasoning, now praying, now conferring, now in mine owne, now in another mans person, bewreathed about the text with a sweet and delightful stile.

Wherefore I intreat them whosoever shall reade it, first that they bee not moued with indignation at that which the writer hath done, for it was his mind wholly to talke (with his God.) Next, that they will pardon the imperfection, and plainnesse of the stile, considering that God is more delighted with words that be simple and pure, than with those that bee artificiall. And if happely the sense in any place appeare either not sound, or not cleare enough,

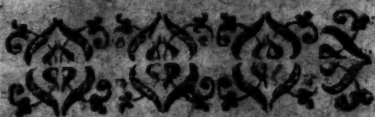
The Authors Preface.

enough, my desire is to haue a
godly corrector of the same,
telling him withall, that what
fond matter so euer he shall e-
spie, it hath escaped from mee
not of purpose, but rather for
that I was not heedie enough
in marking what I writ. More-
ouer, forasmuch as man in that
iudgment of his which is most
probable, may bee deceiued;
vnto thee O God Almighty, &
father of lights, doe I thine
humble disciple make re-
course, and this Sole-talk (of
mine) do present before thy di-
uine Maiesty, to the end that
thou maist both approue the
things well said, and disproue
what is done amiss, & insinuate
also either into my self, or some
other faithful seruant of thine,
more rightly to obserue what-
soeuer things are offensive.

My request is also, holy Fa-
ther

The Authors preface.

ther, that I thy poore seruant
may obtaine at thy hands both
time & space to abide in the al-
plentifull pastures of the Scrip-
tures, which be & shall be my
chiefest comfort, vntil that day
of eternity appear, & the sha-
dow of mortality doe decline
away. And therefore withdraw
thou from me all vnprofitable
cares, worldly desires, hurtfull
affections, and what else may
hinder me from my desired lei-
sure. For he must haue a free
minde and a quiet, that would
meditate of hidden & heauenly
matters. Wherefore that I
may bee worthy to attaine my
sute, vouchsafe thou (my God)
to endue and fill me with the
grace of thine heauenly ioy
that I may speake to thy glory
& to some comfort of my owne
soule.



The fourth booke of *the Imitation of* CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

1. *A longing of the soule after God.*
2. *The incomprehensible maiesty of the Lord.*
3. *An exhortation to the loue of God.*

SONNET.



*For mee, it is good to
draw neer unto God.* Psal. 73.3

O short, and O
sweet saying, embracing
God, and abandoning
the vniuersall world!

What more can be said? And what
moreouer is to be desired? Would
not suffice if that was performed
which now is spoken? And were o-

The fourth booke

ther, yea many other things vttered
should not all in the end be reduce
vnto this one thing?

Therefore, my soule, say thou
with the Prophet, *As for me it is good
to draw neere vnto God* ^b.
^b Ps. 73. 28.

O my God, thou art mine one
felicitee; thou alone art good ^c, and
sweet vnto me.
^c Lu. 18. 19

To speak of thee, it delighteth
louer; to thinke of thee, it liketh
religious, whose heart is not fixe
vpon the world ^d, but hidden with
thee in the heauens, to the end thou
both thou alone maiest bee his tri-
umpe ^e, and in most ioy: and he not
vexed daily in this world, where
false concupiscence doth prouoke
vnto sin ^f.
^f Phil. 4. 7.

O my God, how is hee affected
which is inflamed with thy loue
How doth hee reioyce, that hath
pleasure in any vaine creature!
^g Rom. 8.
^h 35. 36. &c.
ⁱ 1. Cor. 13. 4.
^j 5. &c.

Are not these the words of such
man in that Psalm, whereour
beginning of my speech was taken
euen these his words?

*Whom haue I in heauen but thee
and I haue desired none in the earth
with thee.*
^k Ps. 73. 25.

MAN. O holy soule, O zealous

for

Chap. 1. 3 Worldly things but vaine things.
of the Imitation of Christ.

SOULE so longing after God: What is that I heare? what is that thou saist? Are the things both in heauen and in earth but small things in thine eyes?

SOULE. Surely I take all things but for trifles.

M A N. What then seekest thou? Whom would you haue without these? and where will you finde him if not in these things?

Hath he eyther name, or place, or habitation to be sought by?

Where is the place where his honour dwelleth? of which in a certaine Psalme thou sangest, saying:

O Lord, I haue loued the habitation of thy house, and the place where thine honour dwelleth.

i Psal. 16. 8.

Make answer, I pray thee. For, if thou canst, shew me him, I will goe with thee, and wee will seeke him together, yea, and he shall be thy God, and my God: and wee shall bee full happy when we haue found him, and hold him.

SOULE. Why aske you this at mine hand? or why so curiously doe you enquire of this matter of mee? Think you I can or am able to vnderstand such things? what though gladly I

The fourth booke

would, conceiue not yet, that what through the rarenesse of the thing and the deepenesse of the mysterie, am restrained backe?

What aske you mee? Aske them who haue both heard and seene, they are such as better can describe him whom you seeke.

But rather aske him that knoweth all things. For he it is of whom we speake, that both best can tell you who himselfe is, yea and best declare the place of his owne abode. Euen
 k Psal. 94. 1. he it is (and none other) which teacheth man^l knowledge, and giueth
 3. 9. 10. his grace also to the^m humble.
 IPsal. 119. 12. he it is (and none other) which teacheth man^l knowledge, and giueth
 Psal. 94. 12. his grace also to the^m humble.
 25. 1. 4. 6.

Make recourse vnto him which reueleth himselfe when he will, and to whom hee will, neither is there any beside him that can open. Hee alone can reueale to thee what the ioy is of such as loueⁿ him, and that
 in Mat. 11. 25. farre more excellently than I can tell
 1. Cor. 2. 9. you.

M A N. But why speake you on this wise, O holy & humble Soule? Thinke not that I wou'd know that of you, which neither ought to be knowne, nor can be vndered. Keep your secret to your selfe: let your doore still abide shut vpon you:

of the Imitation of Christ.

The seale of faith remain vncancelled,
neither let the vaile, for me, be remo-
ued from the sanctuarie.

Eate you holie bread (by your
selfe) in the chappell, goe into the
tabernacle of your house, ascend in-
to the vpper parlour, enter into the
cellar of the eternall king, or, which
is more noble, and soundeth more
sweetly, euen into the Bridechamber
of your celestiall spouse.

I know it is written, *It is not good* Mat. 15. 26
to take the childrens bread, & to cast it
to whelps. I know this, I say, and haue
read it: but marke againe what fol-
loweth, and take pittie vpon mee, ac-
cording to the word of her that said, 9 Mat. 15. 27
The whelps doe eate of the crummes
which fall from their masters table.

And therefore hide not that from
mee which I demand, but of the
greatnesse of your inward pleasures,
poure out euen a sparkle of the fierie
loue. Giue me one small drop of pre-
cious wine, send forth some little sa-
uour of the best ointment, whose
chiefest part and lonely comfort is
well and vsually knowne to thee,
that I also may taste thereof.

Why linger you? Satisfie my de-
fire, and open the doore to a friend

The fourth booke

now at this third knocke.

O beloued, speake of the welbeloued, let not me be neglected.

If you cannot describe him rightly as he is, yet speak of him so well as you can. For indeed as hee is, who is able to describe him? Yea, who is able to conceiue the describer?

Therefore, if not, as in himselfe he is: yet tell me what thou thinkest of him. If not what to himselfe: yet utter out how good hee hath beene to thee.

For, who euer shall search forth what he is in himselfe?

Thou wilt neuer doe it, because thou hast plainly confessed, and not
 Ps. 139. 6. *denied, how speaking of him,*

7. *Thy knowledge is too wonderfull for mee: it is so high that I cannot attaine unto it: whither shall I go from thy spirit?*

If then thou art not able to know thine owne spirit, which the Creator
 Isa. 17. 25 & quickner of all spirits hath made,
 Gen. 2. 7. how at any time wilt thou know him which is vncreated? Did not this
 Ps. 35. 10. make thee all amazed to say, O Lord who is like unto thee?

Notwithstanding, of all friendship, by some similitude describe him, whose essence thou hast not yet attained

of the Imitation of Christ.

ained vnto: Neither is it for you to
denie to show him in part, whom
you thinke cannot wholly be reuea-
led.

S. I must needs say you are too cu-
rious, and importune vpon me. Thou
searchest all my priuities, and lettest
in thine hand into the secrets of my
chamber.

I sent thee vnto him, and comcest
thou againe vnto me: Seeke you me,
or him?

But I pray you, of what spirit art
thou? Be still I beseech thee, & trou-
ble mee not. For whom thou seekest,
he is aboue me.

M. But can hee that seeketh after
God, so easily giue ouer? Protract
not to speake, for you may comfort
me forth-with. How long will you
keepe mee in suspence? What, doe
you say and vsay?

As I liue I will not giue ouer, ex-
cept you blesse mee. For I count it
a blessing, if thou show mee thy
God.

Now therefore if thou hast seene
him, tell mee plainly, and I will take
him vpon my shoulders

S. I know thou hast a great desire,
and a loue vnto the creator,

The fourth Booke

But a great thing is it which you require at mine hands, and ſuch thing as I am in doubt whether it may be done or no.

He whom thou ſeekeſt, knoweth right well: for it is not in mee to let thee know ſo much.

Your demand ſeemeth vnto mee to bee like that of the Spouſe which in the ſongs did ſay:

Can. 8. 1. 6

Shew mee, O thou, whom my ſoule loueth, where thou feedeſt.

Wilt thou then learne of me who this is, or what good hee hath done with mee? Doubtleſſe it is not in mee to ſhow you.

But you are not content, neither his greatneſſe, who exceedeth the 7 hea-
9th King. 8. uens, can deterre you, nor my weakeneſſe, which in his eyes am nothing, make you to deſiſt.

Why haſt thou laide this burden vpon mee? I am not able to tell thee, vntill I goe into the ſanctuarie of
2 Pl. 73. 17. God, and vnderſtand the ſame.

Why are you ſo deſirous to know that which may not be vttered?

M. And will you not? Oh, how faine would I bee inſtructed! For thoſe things we are moſt earneſt to know, which the moſt hardie may bee

reue-

of the Imitation of Christ.

reuealed.

Notwithstanding, once againe I pray you bee not so hard, as altogether to be silent.

Thinke not that forthwith I will vtter what you shall say, vnto our enemye. I will keepe your saying as a friend, yea as a very friend ought to doe.

You may boldly tell mee your minde secretly. Lo we two be heere alone: neyther I with lightnesse nor you with arrogancie are delighted, but in him which hath giuen vs vnderstanding, euen of him will wee speake.

And if happely he come while we are talking, let vs giue place, and let him be betweene vs. If he vouchsafe to speak, let vs heare him gladly, and be silent till he haue done. At which time you shall not be bound to satisfie my demands: for when hee speaketh all flesh must be still.

S. This couenant I like well. Only let him be with vs, and bee wee carried vnto our secret places. Let him be the guide of our speech, and conduct vs whither our delight is to goe.

This beloued of whom you so

The fourth Booke^a Ps. 113. 9. 6.^b Iob 9. 10.^c 11.^c Ps. 8. 1. 2.^d 2. Chro.

6. 13.

^e Psal. 139.

7. 8. & c.

^f Gen. 1.

12 & c.

Ps. 139. 12.

diligently enquire, is for his greatness ^a vnspokeable, for his height and glory ^b incomprehensible, for his strength and magnificence ^c infinite. Whatsoever is either spoken or written of him cometh far behinde his Maiestie, because in glory hee excelleth all things.

The heauens haue said, He hath ouerpast, ascended, and preuailed ouer ^d vs.

The earth hath answered, If the heauens, and the heauen of heauens doe not comprehend him, aske not me of ^e him.

The starres haue sung, Wee are darkenesse and not light, vnlesse hee inlighten ^f vs.

The sea trembled, and said, Hee is not in mee, and the deepe knoweth him not.

Heare you what they say?

M. I heard, and was sore troubled; at their voice my very lips trembled.

S. What then will become of thee if we should aske him? Let vs speak vnto him.

O Lord, art thou hee of whom the Prophets haue prophesied, and whose commandement all things in their seasons doe obey?

Verily

of the Imitation of Christ.

Verily, I am that I am, and be- **G O D.**
 sides me there is none other ^h God : **Exod. 3. 14.**
 I am the beginning & the ending : **h Dent. 4.**
 I am the ^h Creator, and the Gover- **Psal. 18. 31.**
 nour ^l of all things. I haue, saith the **Esa. 45. 21.**
 Lord, and I will reigne for euer and **i Reuel. 18.**
 euer. **k Esa. 42. 5.**
Aa. 17. 24.
1 Heb. 1. 3.
Ioh. 5. 17.

Now little worme, what sayest
 thou being inuironed with such
 light ?

Loe, thy beloued, whom thou **S O V L E.**
 thoughtest was with mee, speaketh
 vnto thee.

Hee was with mee when I ^m said, **m Ps. 73. 28.**
 For mee it is good to draw neere vnto
G O D.

Hee will be with thee, if thou also
 wilt ^a say, *My soule refuseth comfort :* **n Ps. 77. 2.**
the day of miserie I desire o not, for **oler. 17. 16.**
thou art my king and my ^p God. **p Psal. 5. 2.**

Bee not like to raging louers, but
 loue **G O D** alone, seeke him alone,
 which admitterh no companion of
 the world into his fellowship.

Talke thou onely with him, and
 though he depart, leauing the roome
 void, beare all things patiently. For
 his wont is to goe and come, to
 proue his friend, and make him
 perfect

The fourth booke.

perfect in louing.

If thou desire his presence, beare
his absence patiently. Waite, and
waite againe, hee will depart for
while, and after a while will againe
returne.

Loue maketh thee thus affected,
which now heaueth thee on high, &
straight way flingeth to the ground
againe.

His loue is than all floures sweeter,
than lilies fairer, & brighter than the
precious stones.

For no creature is to be preferred
before the loue of ⁹ God, and there-
fore for that euery thing is to be ^r de-
spised.

⁹ Mat. 10.
37. ^r Mat. 16.
26. Luk. 9. 29.
So soone as I was touched inward-
ly with his loue, I forthwith began
so to be inflamed in my minde, that
bidding adieu to all things in the
world, I onely wished for his most
pure embracements, and, as it were
bearing hot coles out of a burning
Ouen, I vttered these words which
Psal. 73. 25. but few doe vse.

26. Whom haue I in heauen but thee? and
I haue desired none in the earth with
thee. God is the strength of mine head
and my portion for euer.

By these gather now of thy belo-

ued.

ed, what manner a one and what he
 , which incomprehensibly excee-
 leth all the things which are & haue
 ing.

And although he can neyther by
 words be vttered, nor conceiued in *Iob 23. 8.*
 minde, because hee is infinite: yet is
 he very louely, tractable, fellowly, &
 to be intreated, insomuch as though
 he cannot be comprehended, yet af-
 ter a strange maner hee may be lo-
 ued.

For by loue hee is taken, yea by
 loue fast bounden: but by desire he
 is sought, by prayer knocked at, and
 by hope attained.

If as yet I haue not satisfied you,
 let him, whom you haue sought, sa-
 tisfie you, and teach you, aboue all
 teachers, to finde himselfe.

Chap.

The fourth booke

Chap. 2.

1. Of God his distinct iudgement
at the end of this world. 2. The cursed
state of the vngodly.

a Ps. 86. 11.



Kiss mine heart vnto
thee, O Lord, that
may feare thy holy
Name.

O my God, thou
art much to be lo-
ued, yea, and to

b Ps. 96. 4. bee feared much thou^b art.

Hee that loueth, let him bee glad:
but hee that loueth not thee, let
him quake and feare. But he which
neither doth feare thee, nor loue
thee, is vtterly foolish and franticke.

For, it is a fearefull thing to fall into
c He. 10. 31. thy c hands.

And, who knoweth the power of thy
d Ps. 90. 11. d wrath? Or, who may abide the day
e Mal. 3. 2. of thy comming vnto c iudgement?

For, thy roaring shall bee like a
f Es. 5. 29. f Lion: and thy glittering sword like
a consuming fire

At the sound of thy voice all the
dwellers in the world shall bee moo-
ued, and when thou comdest, all
the foundations of the earth shall
shake.

Chap. 2. 18 Gods wrath is vponable.
of the Imitation of Christ.

shake.

g 2. Pet. 3. 7.
Reu. 6. 14.

VWho then but will feare? or by
what meanes can any escape thine
hands?

If a man will hide himselfe vpon
the strongⁱ rock, thou wilt thunder
thereupon, and it shall rend asunder.

h Pl. 139. 7.
8. &c.
i Isai. 2. 19
20. &c.

And if he lurke in caues or moun-
taines, hee shall be plucked^a out and
be made to sustaine thyⁱ displeasure,
because hee cared not for thy fa-
uour.

k Hos. 10. 3.
Luk. 23. 30.
l Reu. 6. 16.
17.
Reu. 9. 6.

Surely there is no place which
can hide man from thy^m presence.

m Iob 23.

For all things are naked and open
in thineⁿ eyes: thou seest the heart
and the^o reins, and beholdest the
most secret affections of the thought,
so that no secret is hid from thine
eyes.

10.
Psal. 139. 7.
8. &c.
n Heb. 4. 13
o Psal. 7. 9.

O how terrible wilt thou bee to
sinners, & to the hearts that be har-
dened, which now doe glorie in
ill doing, and triumph in wicked-
nesse, saying, *The Lord seeth^t not, hee
will not^t regard?*

p Eccles. 23.
19. 20.

q Pro. 1. 7
24. 25. &c.
r Ps. 10. 11.
s Psal. 94. 7.

They are so puffed vp with vaine
words, as though thou wouldest ne-
uer come: yea, they turne away
their eyes, that they may not see the
end.

But

The fourth Booke

But in the houre that they thinke
 not thou wilt ^r come, and they shall
 be taken in the snares ^u of their own
 wickednesse. And as theeues & rob-
 bers being suddenly taken are con-
 founded: so shall they be put to con-
 fusion at their due time.

Then wilt thou haue them in de-
 rision which now deride thy ^x ser-
 uants, and euill shall be rendred vnto
 to such as haue abhorred thy righte-
 ousnesse.

Now they stop their eares vnto
 thy voyce, but the time shall come
 when they shall cry and not be
 heard.

Now they turne thy word into a
 fable, but themselves shall be turned
 y Mat, 23. then into a flame of ^y fire. For thy
 word shall goe out with a horrible
 blast, and it shall strike the wicked
 and vabeleeuers without all mer-
 cie.

What will the proude person say
 then so puffed vp with knowledge,
 and swelling in power? What an-
 swere will hee make, when the last
 trumpe shall sound in his ^r eares?
 When thou Lord our God shalt ap-
 pear ^a in Maiesty, together with thine
 Angels ^b and Archangels.

Then

of the Imitation of Christ.

Then all the vngodly deriders of
thy word shall bee huffed: and they
which haue molested thy seruants,
stricken with an horrible^c feare.

e Wild. 5. 2

3. & c.

Then shall they vtterly bee con-
founded, which laying a good con-
science and honestie aside, gaue
themselues to vanitie and wanton-
nesse.

They shall suffer punishment then,
which haue loosed the bridle vnto
the flesh.

Then shall they roare towards hea-
uen, which now are cunning in vaine
muticke and dainties.

Then shall that bee turned into
mourning, which hath been contra-
cted by inordinate pleasure.

They shalbe bound vp in bundles
together to be burned^d then, which^d Mat. 13.
haue beene companions together at
41. 42. 43
drunkennesse and belly-cheere. And
whom loue haue bound in wicked-
nes, the reuenging fire shall roule to-
gether in torments.

O ye foolish, and wretched, O ye
franke and blinde louers of the
world, what doe yee, what is your
meaning? how will yee escape the
vengeance of the Lord?

Why for a little pleasure which
you

The fourth booke

you do loue, do ye hasten vnto eu-
lasting torments? Why feare yee not
hell, which doe so feare a little pe-
nance? And, you which flie the death
of the flesh, why aforehand doe ye
not take heed of the eternall death
of the soule?

Vnlesse therefore yee doe conuert
& repent, ye shall neuer escape these
horrible and fiery torments of Gods
displeasure.

When I consider the day & houre
of the generall iudgement, my bones
doe shake for feare, because intreatie
then shall not turn away the wrath of

eA&. 10. 42 God, but he will be a righteous iudge

1. Tim. 4. 8. to *e* all.

Heb. 12. 23.

O God most holy, mightie, and
mercifull Sauiour, saue me from that
bitter death, and giue me grace to re-
pent, that I may vnfaignedly bewaile
my sinnes before I depart out of this
present world.



CHAP. 3.

1. An humble confession of sinnes.

2. With a prayer for grace
to repent.

Morrow is euer be-
fore ^a me.

^a Ps. 38. 17.

O my G O D,
fondly haue I
spotted my life
wth manifold sins:
but O Lord be-

hold my teares which I shed before
thee, because I haue so much offen-
ded thine holinesse.

For I know that in mee, that is, in
my flesh, dwelleth no good ^b thing, ^b Ro. 7. 18.
and that so long as I carry about a
mortall body, I am not free from
wickednesse.

I therefore doe sinne, and offend
day by day, &, which is more lamen-
table, I suffer many sins to passe away
without sorrow & due repentance.

For being busie most commonly,
and encombred with affaires of the
world, & vaine curiosities, I am not
able so speedily to returne vnto
wholesome teares. Whereof it is that
the darknesse of sinne doth increase

Gods patience is for our
Repentance.

10

Chap

The fourth booke

so mightily against mee, the which
both stop vp the fountaine of grace
and hinder the streames of heauenly
comfort from comming vnto me.

L O R D. And is that a small
fence?

S O V L E. No my God, it is
great sinne, and so much the grea-
ter, as it passeth the sooner from
heart, and doth not pricke mee with
sorrow.

But, Lord, wilt thou not re-
gard this my wicked dealing? How long
shall I delude thee, and thus deceive
my selfe?

Wilt thou alway be silent? where
is thy rod? where is thy spur? where
is thy wand?

O Lord, why dost thou withdraw
thy iudgement, and the paines of hea-
ven from mine eyes?

Were these things alwaies in my
remembrance, could I bee so reche-
lesse?

Thy silence and patience is for
mine ^d amendment: but if I still bee
negligent, wilt thou not then punish
me ^e severely? Surely thou wilt punish
me, if not in this world, yet in the
world to come.

For nothing shall passe away vn-
reuen-
ged.

of the Imitation of Christ.

uenged, neither smal, neither great
ffence.

But much better heere in this
world, where both weeping is pro-
bable, the paine is short, the satisfac-
tion more accepted, and reconcila-
ment sooner had.

And therefore spare not the rod,
but with a sharpe water annoint
mine eyes, and reserve not my sinnes
till the time to come, lest then I
be deliuered vnto the tormentors
till I haue paid the vtmost & far- fMat. 5. 26.
ring.

Better it is now a little for my
profit to be pricked, than hereafter
to feele the bitter paines of hell **Purgatory.**
fire.

Wherefore I am to mourne, and
to conceiue a great sorrow for my
sinnes.

For many things I haue to bewaile,
but no cause at all to laugh.

The darkenesse of mine heart, the
slipperinesse of my conscience, my
crookednesse vnto wickednes, my want
of grace, doe with mee, yea rather of
necessitie doe enforce me to weepe
and to lament.

Furthermore, the remembrance
of manifold temptations, and of as-
saults

The fourth booke

faults to finde, should make me but c
little lust to be merry. ee il

Spare me, O Lord, spare me. m th

For though I weepe, beeing e.
ched inwardly with sorrow, it Bu
maruell, because the time is not ous
weepe. his r

O happy is the houre, when I V
ceiue sorrow for my finnes! Ble e pa
are the teares which doe flow hi
the grieve of heart, at the confide and
tion of the foulencesse of a guilty I
science. he r

And who is able to sound the he f
tom of this depth, and to reprove all i
hidden filthine sse without feeling e v
ie c

g Ioh. 1. 9.

O my God, the true & light, the e h
canst lighten all the obscure place F
of mine heart, yea and burne vnder
the spots thereof, in the spirit of ha
and iudgement. r.

h Psal. 51.
10.

It is in thee to giue a new heart, no
create a new ^h spirit, and there to preail
pare a secret habitation, that it may et
be a place for thee to rest in, and our
tabernacle of thy Name, which
the louer of cleanness, & the ga
of a good conscience. fin

But forsomuch as willingly the s
doest not visite a disordered hou

of the imitation of Christ.

But commonly leanest the same to
be illuded with beastly affections, I
the more carefull lest that betide
me.

But helpe me, O mercifull & gra-
cious God, to repaire the ruines of
this mine house.

Woe to him from whom thou
departest away offended. But peace
to him vnto whom thou descendest,
and with whom thou abidest.

I miserable wretch now placed in
the midst of snares, and loaden with
the shackles of wickednes, what coun-
sell is best for me, or what remedie to
be vsed, but only to lift vp mine hea-
uie eyes vnto thee, that my crie may
be heard in the heauens?

For a polluted conscience shall ne-
uer finde or haue a better medicine,
than bitterly to slay it selfe in pray-
er. And how can extreame tentation
more profitablie be cured that it pre-
uaile nor, than by powring continual
petitions vnto thee, & by humbling
our selues?

But who can giue mee these bles-
sings? I meane to pray and to weepe
as I ought to doe. Where may I
attaine

The fourth booke

attaine that humilitie, and abundance of teares? Doubtlesse of *Ps. 130. 7.* Lord, with whom is¹ mercie, a great redemption.

O Lord, my God, the giuer of *Isam. 1. 17.* grace, grant that I may, as I bound, bewaile mine offences, for they neuer so small, and to amend without vaine excuses, as well the offences which are secret, as those that are well knowne.

Let this mine heartie repentance get me thy fauour again, and pre-
vnto well doing, and to that which
tendeth vnto saluation.



of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 4.

7. A lamentation of the soule for her
weakenes and vnstaiednes in the
race of vertue.

Hine eyes did see mee
when I was without
forme.

a Psal. 139.

O Lord my God, 16.
what in the end will
become of mee, seeing daily I doe
offend?

When shall I amend my life as I
ought to doe? When will it bee bet-
ter with mee? When shall I waxe
strong? And when shall I ouer-
come?

I am cast head-long into the deep
pit of filthinesse. Who can thinke
there is yet hope left to rise againe,
to amende, to goe forward, and to
come vnto the end? Surely, tou-
ching my selfe I am out of all hope:
that mine hope were stronger in
mee.

I greatly do despaire, because my
weakenesse encreaseth through long
troubles: and I see no end of my
morrow, and sinne.

The fourth booke

And though I say, Loe now I will
begin to amend: loe it is now time
I will doe my best to reforme my
self, straight-way, alas, sinne standeth
before mee, the enimie listeth vp
himselfe against mee, and wicked
custome keepeth mee backe with
might and maine, contrarie to my
minde.

O Lord, behold how I am cast
downe and trodden vnder foot: be-
hold the troubles which I doe in-
dure.

Lift vp thy right hand, and deliuer
mee from my persecutors, for they
b Ps. 14. 6. are too strong for me.

My wisdom is perished, and my
strength hath failed me.

Mine arme is broken, neither can
e Ps. 44. 6 my sword saue me.

I see not vnto whom I may flie,
and that will receiue and heale mee,
I know none.

Thou alone continuest my refuge:
but I dare not approach for shame,
because I haue offended thee.

I haue sinned O God, forgive me.
I am sorie, yea heartily sorie that e-
uer I did transgresse thy lawes.

Giue mee that which seemeth
right in thine eyes, and bee mercie

of the Imitation of Christ.

full.

Thou diddest iustly in forsaking mee, and iustly thou diddest commit mee into the hands of mine aduersarie.

But Lord, remember that which thou hast made, amend that which is decayed, for of it selfe it can neuer stand.

Marke my groaning, and my troubles: let the paine and grieve of mine heart at no time bee out of thy remembrance.

O mercifull Father, cast an eye vpon my thraldome, and imprisonment, vpon the misery and crueltie which I doe indure, and bring mee out that am bound, from the prison house, and wretched bondage.

Though a man should liue many ysses, what will hee bee the better thereby? And who knoweth whether he shall amend his wicked life, or be worse and worse?

Man woteth not how hee shall proceed, and end: and his continuance is very doubtfull, because of the manifold chances of euils, and dangerous temptations.

Manye at their first conuersion from sinne, are good and humble,

C

which

The fourth booke

which afterward become forward and rebellious. At the first they were modest and deuout, zealous and silent, and in the end proued carelesse, and dissolute, babblers, & barbarous. And they which at the beginning did bridle their wicked affections, at the length had scarce any care at all, either what they said or did. And so by little and little, wickedness taketh roote, and increaseth, while it is not preuented at the beginning.

Who therefore, but should feare, and be circumspect, seeing such vnluckie chances doe come vnto the good and modest?

Againe, who thoroughly doeth know whether he be elected, or hath strength to beare all things?

¶ *1 A. 14.*

27.

We are to bee tried ⁴, and who is sure that he shall not be burned, seeing temptation is a fire ⁵?

So that all must feare, and hope alike of the better: but none is rashly to presume, nor yet proudly to bee secure.

¶ *Pro. 17. 3.*

Indeede the gold which is tried ⁶, shall be preserued: but I aduice thee, O man, to consider wel of what metall thou art.

The

of the Imitation of Christ.

The celestiaall purger will purge,
he wil fine the sonnes of Leui 8, euen ^{g Mal. 3. 3.}
all that are his seruants ^{h 2 Tim. 3.}

It is not alwaies gold, which hath ^{12.}
the colour of gold: neither is it al-
way stubble, or naughty filuer, which
endureth beating, and beareth the
stale. For God beholdeth the very
cogitations and the hearts ⁱ, by them ^{i Psal. 7. 9.}
most commonly working wonders,
which in the opinion of many, are
but cast-awayes.

O Lord God, what ioy can I haue
in this world, when I think vpon the
vncertaintie ^k, and frailtie of all ^{k 2 Pet. 3. 7.}
things vnder heauen? ^{Psal. 102.}

Notwithstanding, this am I sure ^{25. 26.}
of, that thou art good, and that thy
mercy is from generation to genera-
tion on them that feare thee ^{l Luk. 1. 50.}

For thine infinite goodnesse and
mercie, is greater than all my finnes.

And this shall bee my comfort,
while thou giuest me space
to amend my
life.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 5.

1. Of the shortnesse and miserie of this present life. 2. A prayer for grace to renounce the world, and the vanities of the same.

^a Job 14. 4.

^b Heb. 11.

^{13.}
^c 1. Tim. 6.

^{7.}

^d Job 1. 21.

Et me vnderstand the shortnes of my daies. So long as I am in this world, I am wicked: and while I continue vpon the earth, I am poore, a stranger, and a pilgrime.

I brought nothing into the world, and certain it is I can carry nothing thereout: for naked came I out of my mothers wombe, & naked shall I returne thither againe.

As a shadow which passeth away, and as a feather which is tossed vp & downe with the wind: and as a guff of one night, so suddenly shal I passe away.

All the time wee haue heere to liue, is but as the shortest night. Few and euill are my dayes, and after a little while they shall end, and bee as though they had neuer

^e Ge. 47. 9.

of the Imitation of Christ.

beene.

And when man is dead, what is in man but filthines? Who will haue any care of a stinking carcas? Or who wil inquire of the absent being dead? whereas being aliue he was accounted of.

A small while is man remembred either of his friends or of strangers: but vndoubtedly the righteous shall be had in euerlasting remembrance, f Psal. 112. 5. because hee shall bee euerlastingly linked to GOD, who is alwaies the same, and shall neuer s die. g Psal. 103. 27.

Therefore happie is he which putteth no trust in man; nor yet reioyceth in any worldly thing, but hath his heart fixed in ^hheauen: for what soeuer is in this world, is transitorie i Psal. 2. 12. i 2. Pet. 3. 7. Psal. 102. 25. 26. and vaine.

Call into thy minde those which haue liued since the world began, i. Cor. 7. 31. ioh. 2. 17.

untill now, and tell, I pray thee, where they bee. And those whom you see and heare to liue now, how long thinkest thou will they indure?

Say therefore of all, Euerie man that liueth, is but ^kvanitie. k Psal. 39. 5.

O miserable and wretched life!

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O fraile, and lamentable life, which good men doe suffer rather than of fire: & wicked men, albe they desire it, yet can they not long inioy the same!

Oh, vanitie of this world, when wilt thou haue an end? when wilt thou cease?

Yet the time will come, when the elect shall bee sette free from the
 1 Rom. 8. 22 bondage of corruption^t, though now they doe lament, because they are
 23. stranged from the kingdome
 of Psal. 1. 23. Christ m.

Would to God, the whole world would euen wither vp in mine heart, and my Lord God, euen mine immortall spouse, seem sweet vnto my soule!

Vndoubtedly, the fleeting ioy of this present life, is but a false and most bitter potion. Let them drinke thereof that list, for afterward they shall feelee a most bitter flixe. And the more one hath drunk therof, the sharper shal his torments be, because the whole pleasure of this world shall more speedily passe away than the windeⁿ, and leaue to their louers paines and burnings^o.

Wils. 8.
9. &c.

Lu. 16. 35

Therefore out of my sight thou deceiue

whi deceiptfull glorie of the world, and
 an all foolith pleasure of the flesh.

def Many you doe draw, and deceiue:
 oy but in the end you leaue and destroy
 them p.

p 1 Ioh. 3.
 15. 16. 17.

who Woe to them which beleeue thee:
 a woe be to them that are there drow-
 ned.

en But come, and come nigh mee,
 m most holy humilitie: and the full re-
 nouncing of all worldly pompes: and
 i no neuer doe thou leaue me, O thou
 are sweete remembrance of my present
 c pilgrimage.

ori What am I but ashes, and earth? q Ecclur.
 can and whither tende I, but towards 10. 9.
 im earth? r Gen. 3. 19

Oh, how wretched am I become!
 how lustly may I lament, when I
 think vpon my pilgrimage, & how
 y little I am priuite how I shall end the
 nd time. (Heb. 11. 13)

ny If I live well, and continue so,
 ne there is no cause why I should feare
 he a euill death. Put who can glorie
 use of a good life, and of a pure consci-
 al ence? He which knoweth himselfe
 he to bee such a one, let him reioyce in
 the Lord, and take compassion vpon
 r on me a sinner. 1 Cor. 1. 14

To liue I haue no desire, because u. Phi. 1. 23

The fourth booke

miserie inuironeth me on euery side
to die, an euill conscience is afraid
for to answer God, it hath not one
Job 9.3. for a^x thousand.

The Prophet was not so in feare
Ps. 108.1. which said, *Mine heart is prepared
O God, my heart is prepared.*

O Lord, the God of my saluation,
let my life come vnto a good end
and prolong not the daies of my la-
mentation. With sorrow I came into
this prison, and without griefe I shall
not get out.

S. Long doe I thinke this life, and
the rather, because of the continuall
miserie and troubles which I finde
therein: but in truth it is not long,
for it passeth away more swiftly than
Job 9.25. a^x Postic.

To a man that liueth in paine and
Eccles. 4.1. miserie, all time is a long, and hea-
2. counteth a day for a yeere. This
maketh my life tedious vnto mee,
and so much the more it doth
trouble mee, as the more truely I
consider all the miseries of the
same.

But, if happily any consolations
and ioy come betweene, it standeth
mee vpon to looke about whether
they be of God, or no. If they bee
of

of the Imitation of Christ.

of God, I accept them gladly, but yet I know not how long they will continue: yet how short soeuer they bee, they like and please mee well.

But, would to God hee would point them largely vpon mee; and cause them to continue with mee a long while.

But the ioyes and pleasures which are not of God, are vile and fading, albeit to the shew they appear sweet and pleasant.

Thus, euen thus passeth away this life, replenished continually both with good and euill things.

Therefore, so long as I liue in this world, I am a poore ^b pilgrime.

^b Heb. 11.

13.

I cannot truely say I haue enough, because presently there is satietie of no good ^c thing: but the good thing which I looke for, thou ^d art, in whom I belecue.

^c Eccles. 1. 8.

^d Psal. 119.

57.

So that when thy glory hath appeared, and replenished mee, then, euen then I will acknowledge, that I haue enough. But in the meane while, because this word is hidden from mee, much grieve and sorrow doth inuiron my soule.

And therefore being mindfull
of

The fourth booke

Mat. 26.
38.

of thine holy saying, I repeat this oftentimes, *My soule is very heauie, euen vnto the death.*

Well were it with me, if this houre were come, and that neither grieve nor sorrow did possesse me.

But, Lord, I beseech thee, let thy goodnes conserue me.



Chap.

chap. 6.

An ardent desire of the soule to
be loosed from sinne, and from the
troubles of this world.



Ring my soule out of pri- a Psa. 142. 7.
son^a.

The greatnesse of
my sorrow will not
suffer me to be still.

For why doe I yet liue in this
world? I know not what I canne do
here.

Slowly, God he knoweth, I goe
forward in vertue: nay would to
God I went not backward.

O Lord, what a pleasure shouldest
thou doe mee, if speedily thou
wouldest take me out of this life,
that a worser thing come not vnto
me^b. b Ioh. 5. 14.

My life, alas, sigheth in paine, and
in wel-doing amendeth not.

If thou looke for my conuersion,
I repent not by the same, but doe a-
buse thy long suffering: if thou pu-
nish mee, I doe hardly shew pati-
ence, because thou pursuest dry
sub.

The fourth booke

e Job 13.25. e stubble.

Why then dost thou not quite take away thy seruant? Why doe I liue vpon the earth? that is, why doe I dwell among good people, & yet reforme not my life and manners? Why, so vnworthily and dangerously keepe I the place of some better person, and yet walke so carelesly and so coldly in this life?

Thus poure I out this woful thing which I consider of, in the care of my God.

Yet, gracious Lord, cry not out in thine anger against me, *Cut downe the tree, and cast it into the fire.* d Luk. 13.7.

I accuse mine infirmitie before thee, that I may finde grace in thy sight through my confession.

It is my part to accuse: but it belongeth vnto thee to shew e mercy. e Dan. 9.9. It is my part to weepe and to sigh bitterly: but it belongeth vnto thee Lord, mercifully to comfort.

Wherefore, my Lord and God, either giue mee more grace in this life, or take mee speedily out of this world, that the rent bee not worse.

For, to liue long, and not to cease from

of the Imitation of Christ.

from ill liuing, is but to augment the punishment of hell.

Neither can I away with such a life as knoweth neither how to proceede in vertue, nor to bewaile wickednesse.

For that partie which leadeth an holy and righteous life, is grieved at the heart whensoever hee offendeth, and that hee may in grace and vertue increase more and more, it is alwaies his desire.

What shall hee doe which knoweth himselfe daily to offend: and that his flesh grievously doth rise against the spirit? who also being overcome with rediounesse sometime, and cooled with negligence and idlenesse, doth give over to resist, or else laying aside the spirituall weapons doth follow the swinge of the flesh, whither his owne will doth draw him.

Alas, Lord and God, such a one alas draweth nigh vnto the gates of death, and liuing in the flesh, runneth into the death of the soule.

Oh, how is euery one to take heed, that he be not seduced and supplanted of the enemy?

No man is sure from temptation, 1. Pet. 5. 8. Mat. 6. 13.

no

The fourth booke

i Iob. 14.4. no man is pure from sinne¹: but
Psa. 51.5.7. the sort of vs are fraile⁴.

k Iam. 3.2.

I Iob. 13.3.

m Eccl. 23.

19.

Est. 13.12.

But Lord, thou which art almighty¹, and knowest all things^m, raise vp the broken in heart: and cleanse the vncleane from all filthinesse, renew a new spirit within his bowels that all faintnesse and lasinesse may leaue him, that spirituall zeale may returne, and that thy loue may continue vnmoueable within him vnto the end.

a Wis. 2.15

For hee onely wanteth thine assistance, who is peised downe with his owne weightⁿ: neither is he able to cast off the loade of sinne, vntil thou send strength from heauen of power to loose the hard fetters of carnall affections.

And this, my request is to obtaine for without thy speciall grace, wee shall neither leade a godly life in this world, nor liue eternally in the life to come^o.

Rom. 6.12

Phi. 1.33

And whereas I now liue in the body, it is no ioy to me: for better it were for me to dye, than to liue, because through this life I am debarred the farther from eternall life, which cannot come, vnlesse that death doe destroy the life present,

yea

of the Imitation of Christ.

and death also it selfe be destroy-

Hence it is, that my desire is to hea-
ven-ward, and mine heart seeking e-
ternall rest fetcheth deep sighes, and
cryeth :

It is now enough, Lord, take away
my soule, which thou hast redeemed
with thy precious blood 9.

Open to me the gate of thy king-
dome, and let in a poore pilgrime,
returning vnto thee from exile.

Listen to me, Lord, and loose me
from the band of the body 10.

What should I longer doe here? I
am good neither to my selfe, nor to
others.

Why then doe I liue? To my self
I am burdensome, to others trouble-
some.

What shall become of me? I wot
not, Lord, whether thou hast fore-
seene any better thing of me, where-
fore my longing should be lingred.

I doe allow thine ordinance, be-
cause it is good: but in me onely I
finde the euill, why it grieveth and
troubleth me to liue in the world.

For daily I doe sinne; I heape
sinne vpon sinne, and yet as I ought,

9. 1 Pet. 1.

18. 19.

1 Heb. 11.

13.

1 Phil. 1. 13.

The fourth booke

I repent not.

It therefore I were loosed from
 Rom. 6. 6. this bodie of^r sinne, and coupled
 thce in heaven, neither should I
 send any more, nor thou bee offe
 ded, but be praised continually.

Notwithstanding as yet thou be
 2. Pet. 8. 9. rest with^m mee, and shewest all p
 ence.

I know my fault; because throu
 my sinnes I may not enter into
 kingdome. For none vncleane thin
 2. Ep. 1. 5. 9. shall enter^x therein.

Rev. 22. 15. But when shall I be without sinne
 When shall I thoroughly be cleansed
 that I may not feare to bee prohibi
 ted, but reioyce rather to be let in?

If I goe not forward more zel
 louslie, nor be more carefull than h
 therto I haue bin. I am affraide, mine
 hope will be little enough.

But Lord, thou which wilt that
 1. Tim. 2. no man should^v perish, but that all
 4. should bee saued, graunt mee more
 1. Pet. 3. 9. grace to the amendment of my life;
 and to hope for celestiall blessings,
 giue mee the spirit of inward fan
 nesse.

Let not mine heart heere reioyce
 after the flesh; but in fearing let
 expect

of the Imitation of Christ.

pect for death.

Let no cate or creature hold mee
cke: but let thy desired presence
aw and comfort me.

Blessed is the man which trusteth
thee, O Lord: but more blessed
he that is passed out of this wicked
orld, for hee shall no more either
ele or feare any trouble.

z Pl. 37. 34
and 37. 14

a Reu 7. 17
and 21. 4.



Chap.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 7.

I. A godly desire for a good death.

APCa. 71.5.



Lord, thou art mine
euen from my youth.

In this hope I fly
to thee, vntill the
houre and time of

resolution shall come.

Oh that I were so well prepared
that I might euen now dye vnder
hope of grace!

b Wis. 9.13

Oh that I had ended this life with
an happy departure; and laided
the load of this body^b; how many
dangers and feares had I then
scaped?

Happy is the man whom thou hast
chosen and taken vp, who is now
gone out of the world vnto thee
ther^c; from banishment, vnto a king
dom^d; from the prison vnto the
place^e; from darknesse vnto light^f
from death vnto life^g; vnto security^h
from dangersⁱ; from labour vnto
rest^j; and from all manner misery
vnto euerlasting felicitie^k.

e Mat. 5.48.

d Ma. 23.34

e Phi. 1.23.

f Reu. 22.5.

g Reu. 21.4.

h Reu. 7.16

i 17.

j Re. 14.23.

k Reu. 22.5.

Happy is the soule that now enioyeth

ioyeth

of the Imitation of Christ.

With her reward, triumphing in
her Lord!

But, alas that my Countrie is so
kept from me!

How graciously and mercifully 1 Psa. 110. 5

wouldest thou deale with mee, if
suddenly I were called away, and bid-
den to come vnto thee, that where
thou art I might be also?

Oh that I had beene taken out of
this world, before euer I had known
the filthinesse of the same, and before
I was affraide to offend euen in small
things: how happy then had I been?
But now the longer here I liue, the
more I wander from thee, and do sin
too too many things.

Woe is mee, what haue I done?

Alas, I haue followed the desires of
the flesh, and haue drawn vanitie to
my selfe with roapes, but godlinesse
I haue abandoned, abhorred inno-
cencie, and added sinne vnto sinne:
so that now to my grieve I finde that

true which I haue sometime read^m,

Woe be to the wicked, it shall bee euill

with him.

Too too late almost I haue retur-

ned vnto my G O D, yea very late

it was ere I began to amend, & then

The fourth booke

too but slowly went I on; I
not zealous enough in my pro-
ding; I did not increase in zeale,
which is worser, I waxed cooler
cooler.

Hence it was that many time
was very loath to die, because
guiltie conscience still told me
not liued as I should haue done.

Notwithstanding, in consider-
on of the dangerous tempta-
(whereunto I am subiect) and
my sinnes might not increase, at
a time haue I wished for death:
into these words haue I burst,
ing:

Oh that now God in mercy wo-
take mee out of this world, that
might sin no more vpon earth:
that God speedily would vouch
to take mee away, and make an
of my labours, in what an hap-
state should I then be?

But, Lord, all things must bee
as thou wilt. If thou minde
do that which I require, it shall for-
with bee accomplished: but if oth-
wise, thy will be done.

I may vnder out my desire,
the misery which I indure, nor

of the Imitation of Christ.

him which is ignorant thereof,
that thereby I may finde some
comfort to my soule.

I know I am not yet ready as I
ought to bee, for my conscience is
scarcely out of quiet.

And what marvell though I, a sin-
ner, doe stand in feare, seeing many
of the holy fathers were afraid,
because thou iudgest not as man
doth.

But how shall I prepare my selfe?

Were good for mee to prepare my

selfe against that time, which may

come this day before to morrow for

any thing I know.

Therefore I will more firmly al-

low my purpose: I will bewaile all my

iniquities passed: I will sacrifice

my selfe to thee, and wholly & hence-

forth commend my selfe vnto thy

mercy, O Lord:

O Lord, my God, all my works do

depend at thy mercie: and without

thy mercie I haue no merits. And

in mine hope, this is all my trust.

How fareth it with a good and

pure conscience? What saith the

righteous, and deuout soule? Come,

come, Lord Iesus, O come, and

tarie

2. Sam. 7. 6.

17.

Iohn 8. 15.

16.

Eph. 1. 6.

1. 1. 1. 1.

Rom. 21.

20.

The fourth booke

carry not, vntie my sinnes, loose
fettlers, bring me out of prison, out
the lake of miserie, and mirie clay

9 Psal. 40.
21.

I haue waited patiently for the
O Lord, incline to me and heare
cry. Leau me not any longer in
wicked world.

Let it content thee that hithe
I haue striuen, that so long I haue
in exile; that I haue not deserved
enjoy thee, nor to see thee face
face.

1 Cor. 13.
22.

Rgs. 22. 4.

Grant mee to enjoy the long de
red ioy, which no time shall end,
troubles overshadow.

Mat. 18. 10

Shew me thy countenance, wh
the Angels continually behold

Let thy voyce bee heard in m
cares, which they without ceasing
heare.

1 Heb. 11.
12. 13.

Come Lord Iesu, and take mee
of this forrain countrie: call
wretch home vnto my country;
restore mee a sinner vnto my forme
puritie.

Mat. 1. 21.

Come gracious Redeemer, mak
mee partaker of thine eternall
rie.

It is hie time that I returne
thee, it is now time that I comm
my body to the earth, whereon

the Imitation of Christ.

was taken x.

x Gen. 2. 7.

The matter is not great where the body be laid, or how it be handled, if so be the soule bee safe, and come vnto thee.

Let my spirit doe well, which I commend into thine hands, and let my flesh rest in hope to be raised vp y 1 Cor. 15. againe in the last y day. For where- 1. 52. 53. soeuer it be buried, it can neuer bee far, or hid from thee.

Remoue from mee the companie of men, and ioyn me to the societie of thy Saints. For this temporall life is irkesome to me: but to thinke of the day of everhall glorie, reioyceth mine heart.

Oh, let not the old serpent z Reu. 12. 9. withstand mee at my departure out of Egypt: let not the enemie barke against me in the gate: let neither Satan with his ougly sight terrifie, nor the horror of death trouble me, but let thine holy Angels faithfully assist, stoutly aide, valiantly protect, louingly receiue, and ioyfully bring me vnto the euerlasting felicity of thy celestiaall Paradise.

And mercifull, louely, and blessed Iesu, doe thou graciously, I beseech thee, behold mee: and cast

D

me

The fourth booke

mee not out of the number of thy
seruants: but remember, O Sonne
of God, how thou hast redeemed
me with thy precious^a blood.

^a Eph. 1. 3. 7

¹ Pet. 1. 18.

69

Receiue mee into glorie, and thank
in thy mercy and goodnesse, because
greatly haue I wished to solemnize a
pasleouer with thee.

Oh happy day of my desired re-
ward. Come blessed houre of ble-
ssed passage, which long I haue de-
sired, and kept before mine eyes.

^b Ro. 8. 18. What now haue the troubles and
afflictions in the world hurt^b mee?
What am I the worse for the con-
tempt, labour, & humiliation for thy
namesake?

^c Phi. 1. 24. Thou hast been my life, and now
death will be to mee an^a aduantage,
and to be with thee in thy kingdom
will be absolute felicitie.

Now praise and glory bee to thee
^d Ioh. 11. 35 who art the life of such as^d liue,
^e A& 2. 26 hope of those which^e dye, the
saluation and rest of all

which trust in

thee.

^f Psa. 117. 7.

Psa. 34. 8.

Pro. 16. 20.

He

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 8.

A meditation of one dead vnto
the world, yet alive in
Christ,



Turne away mine eye
from regarding ^a va-
nitie.

Psal. 119

37.

Oh Iesu which art
the true ^b life, which ^b Ioh. 11. 9

neuer shall haue end; giue me grace
that through loue of thee I may be
consumed, through loue wounded,
through loue killed, that the flesh
reuaile not ouer me.

I am not as yet thoroughly dead to
the world, but the old man yet li-
ueth in ^c me, raising vp within mee
much contention, and desires of ma-
nifold euils, and making the nights
bitter, and the daies tedious vnto
mee.

^c Ro. 7. 21

Oh when will it fall out, that bold-
ly I may say, I thought my selfe as a
dead man? For he which dead is, doth
weigh neither the prayses of men,
nor the reproches of the malignant,
because he is dead.

Hee which touching the flesh is

D 2

dead,

The fourth booke

dead, neither speaketh, nor smelleth, nor tasteth, nor exerciseth any waye, yea, he neither heareth also the vanitie of this world: againe, he regardeth not curious & beautifull thinges enticing vnto the loue of some thing vpon earth.

And he which is dead to the world is not in the world, but in God, whom hee liueth; euen as Paul the beloued Disciples doth say,

d Col. 3. 3. are dead, and your life is hid in God in Christ.

This man doth so speak, so that he so behold things without, as though they were not. For the things which are seene, are temporall, and vaine, but the things which are not seene are eternall.

e. 1 Joh. 2.

17.

f. 2 Cor. 4.

18.

Hither doth hee cast his eye: thither doth hee hasten: hither is his desire: for these things doth hee labour: to attaine these things in his studie.

g. Col. 3. 1. 2

These things hee wiseth, these things hee loueth, these things hee seeketh, these things hee saoureth, euen which are within, and secret to wit, great good things, soules and eternall things, of which he cannot thinke too often, but

the Imitation of Christ.

They are exceeding precious, and sweet, and delectable, and more than utterable.

h 1 Cor. 2 9

This man is farre estranged from present things, and breatheth altogether after things eternall, having the dominion over the sensuall appetite.

i Gal. 5. 14

k Col. 3. 2

For the flesh seeketh outward, desireth pleasant, loveth present, loatheth absent, flieth all sharp and bitter things, which notwithstanding are good for the soule. Whence it cometh, that it will not suffer the spirit to be at rest, but layeth before sundry fantasies, which are scarce to be spoken, and in truth not to be accounted of.

l Rem. 8.

4. 5. &c.

But hee which is endued with the grace of spiritual fortitude, may with more ease subdue the insolent motions of the flesh, singing in the word of the divine power, *The Lord is with me, therefore I will not feare what flesh can doe unto me.*

m Ps. 118. 6

Therefore albeit this sensualitie doth move battell, and the voyce of the flesh doth secretly murmure; yet doth not the spirituall man easily consent; for greater is the force of the divine love which inwardly

n Ro. 8. 23.

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doth comfort.

This man now and then so sweetly, so strongly, and so earnestly drawne, rauished, and in loue with God, that scarcely he doth see, nor perceiue the things about him, nor be heard in the world: because he is not there, but ^o elsewhere: not below, but aloft euen with God, as in God, which moueth the spirit within him, and erecteth, and he were carrieth it away in a fiery chariot, that at the length it may end him in an happy, and holy, and long wished desire of his heart.

o Mat. 6. 21

This man is seldome found (if abroad), because his friend hath borne him away. There quietly alone he heareth his speech, euen the speech of his beloued, and greatly doth reioice to heare the voice of his vn suspected spouse.

2 Tim. 2. 17

Neither straight-way doth he cast his phial vpon the ground to destroy vanity: but hideth the same treasure, and shutteth it vnder lock and key, that the foot of pride come not in, and so all vertue do perish. Thus hee saith to Philemon, *Set mee a seale on thine heart,* and so forth as followeth in that place.

p Cant. 8. 6

of the Imitation of Christ

It is good to seale the heart, and to keep it, lest the beloued goe backe, and flye away: because he seeketh & visiteth aboue all, a pure & an humble heart.

g Mat. 11. 8.
Mat. 11. 29.

These things hee thinketh with himselfe, and is astonished at that good thing which passeth all sense, and gifts. Yea still hee wandreth, and enquireth diligently, what thing is this? and exceedingly reioyceth, for that Manna is come down from heauen.

And he which ministreth true bread from ^r heauen, doth giue also a good ³² vnderstanding to the taster, that hee may know, how euery good giuing and euery gift is from aboue, and commeth downe from the Father of lights.

f 1am. 1. 17.

This word now, saith he, is from God. Without him there is nothing. I haue all things from him.

c 1oh. 1. 3.

Furthermore, this spirituall man, he wondereth, and lamenteth that he so lightly esteemeth so excellent a good thing, by the which he is not a little blessed; and why also he doth not often bend his heart to heare and to see that, than the which nothing is more sweet, and

The fourth booke

blesſed to be deſired

And would to God henceforth
I might thus doe, For this exceedingly doth delight mee, and more
will delight mee, the more I give
my ſelfe vnto theſe meditations.

Oh that my beloued would come
into mine heart, that I might taſte
the ſweetneſſe of his apples.

Oh that hee would decline vnto
me, and ſhew himſelfe to me, and me
to himſelfe. Hee is my felicitie and
mine only delight.

Now begin I to couet, and deſire,
and greatly to loue this good thing,
in whom all good things are: this
ioy, in whom is all ioy: this one
thing, in whom are all things, ſmall
and great, baſe and hie: yet nothing
created, but without all conception
of man, the beginning and the end of
all the good things which hee hath
formed.

Hence it is that now and then
I would thoroughly bee replenished
with this good thing, and filled with
that ſo heavenly ioy: and I couet
after a ſort euen to bee ſwallowed vp
and conſumed vnto him, that
mine inſatiable deſire might once be
ſatisfied in ſuch ſort, that nothing

u Aa. 17.
28.

K Rev. 1.8.
17

of the Imitation of Christ.

me might bee mine, but his onely whose the fire and heat of loue is, whose this wonderfull worke is also, that so I might the more greedily be carried to him-ward, and be made one spirit together with him.

Notwithstanding, all this doth not pufte vp the godly man, or make him to thinke himselfe some-what, or to despise others, or to iudge inferiours : for he knoweth that whatsoever he hath commeth not of himselfe, but it is the free gift of y^e God, y^e 1 Cor. 4. 7. that therby he is not to waxe proud, when he perceiueth himselfe to be so comforted of the Lord.

For hee seeketh not the prayse of man, he careth not for forrain fauor, but hee seeketh the beloued, his prayse and his fauour hee onely desireth, in whom hee hath all things, and shall finde more than all these things : because hee preferreth his loue, his sweetnesse, and the ioyfull enioying of him before all transitory things : and his honour hee seeketh and sigheth for aboue all things else. And therefore he cannot bee proud, nor boast of any thing.

(God) he is his glory, his prayse, and his comfort. (God euen) hee 2^d 2 Cor. 13.

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is his true and perfect ioy, his soueraigne and sole happinesse all his desire and perfection. And which more is, he would haue others also thus to reioyce with him, and to enioy such felicitie without end both in this world, and in heauen too.

For this is his desire and prayer that God would reueale himselfe to all men, and that he would vouchsafe to conuert & draw all vnto him, that he alone might be praised & glorified: for he is both loue it a selfe, and such a fountain of loue, as neuer can be drawn dry. For he doth more loue all men than all men (set together) can loue him.

Notwithstanding, it liketh him well, if any man hath a desire to loue him from the bottome, although he cannot sound vnto the depth. For he in louing deuoureth, vanquisheth, & surpasseth all.

of the Imitation of Christ.

Chap. 9.

A desire of the soule, that no
earthly creature may carry
 her away vnto va-
 nitie.



*Behold, I would take my
 flight far off, and lodge
 in the ^a mountaines.*

a Psal. 55. 7.

Oh how profitable,
 how sweet, and how
 ioyfull a thing it is to sit solitarie in
 silence, to talke with God, and to en-
 ioy the onely good thing, in which
 are all good ^b things.

b Iam. 1. 17.

Would to God I were so conioy-
 ned to that simple and onely good
 thing, that I might be moued with
 none affections and distractions of
 wanitory things, nor curiously fa-
 sten mine eyes vpon any creature, &
 visible thing.

O wretched man that I am, who
 shall deliuer me from the body of
 this death?

c Ro. 7. 24.

Alas how often dyeth my soule for
 the creatures which shee loueth! oh
 many times she forgetteth her Crea-
 tor, and is carried away for their
 sakes.

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Mine vnstable minde now willett
this thing, now that thing, now it is
here, now there, seeking but not fin-
ding rest in creatures: because there
is no creature which can yeeld full
d Ecclus 1.8 satietie to be ^d enjoyed, though it
hath some delectation for vse.

The heart of man is vnsearchable,
e. Ier. 17.9. and who can know ^e it? O Lord,
f. Ps. 4.11. thou knowest the thoughts of men,
g. 1 Tim 1. that they are ^f vaine.

17. O eternall ^g God, most hie and
h. Psal. 139. infinite, the ⁱ Creator, and Gouver-
7.8.&c. nour of all ^k things, I am thy ^l crea-
i. Act. 17. ture, which thou hast made by thy
24. power.
k. Ps. 97. 1.
l. Ps. 100. 3.

8. 119. 73. Thou hast made me that I should
loue thee, and gladly would I loue
thee, but I cannot as I would.

For I am fettered with vaine loue,
and with clammy affection of tran-
sitory things; from which, while I
would rid my selfe, hardly or not at
all can I so do without great paine.

Oh how soone would they fly and
perish, if thou Christ wert sweet and
didst saueur in my nostrils.

Notwithstanding, sometime through
the sight of the minde I doe beholde
thine inuisible things, by the crea-
tion of the ^m world, & thee also

oueraigne felicitie, the true and eternall God.

And gladly would I continue in these meditations: but forthwith, I know not with what winde I am blowne away from them, and held downe like a miser by the loue and weight of visible things.

Behold, I firmly doe purpose in mine heart, as it were making a covenant betweene me and thee, that for thy noble and precious loue, I will neither loue nor looke vpon any creature, but will contemne all things, yea my selfe and all mine: but straight way worldly, fleshly, and familiar cogitations doe ascend into mine heart, as though in them were a certaine felicitie, and as though, if I contemned them, I were to forgo some great good thing: and these beare a good countenance, but they hide the wofull end, shewing what is present, but hiding the inconuenience that will ensue, though euery where, and in all creatures thou art to be sought, and that nothing were to be neglected or despised, which hath been made of my God: and thus they withdrew mee oftentimes from my purpose, and at the

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the length vtterly seduce me.

p Ioh. 2. 15.
16. 17.

Oh how vaine, and deceitfull
and almost nothing, are things which
now stand and flourish, proued
p bee, which flying away after these
sudden ioyes, doe leaue me among
the thornes and briars of a guilty
conscience.

q Ioh. 14. 6

But woe is me, Lord, yea woe
again to me, because so soon I haue
beleued and assented to vanity, and
so quickly forsaken thee, which art
the truth.

r Luk. 18.
29. 30.

Oh, how greatly haue I sinned
euen in this, that I haue not sticken
to thee alone, neglecting all things
else.

s Eccles. 1. 8

For I was made to loue and to en-
ioy thee: but by following after crea-
tures inordinately, I haue lost thee,
and found no rest for mine heart in
them s neither.

t Mat. 19. 8
Luke 9. 23.

But turne me vnto thee, O Lord,
and leaue me not in earthly things,
thou which hast vouchsafed to pro-
mise celestiall things to such as fol-
low t thee,

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 10.

1. A comparison betweene earthly,
and heavenly ioyes: 2. with a prayer
for grace to contemne this
transitorie world.



Y. soule hath refused
a comfort.

a Psal. 77.

Wander thou not
after deceitful vani-
ties and madnes, O
my soule, but turn to
the Lord thy God,
for he is the fountain of all b comfort.

b 2 Cor. 1.3.

Whatsoever thou seekest eyther
among men, or among creatures,
thou shalt leese it, and shalt well
perceiue it to perish. For though I
grant, they may yeeld some shew of
comfort, yet sure I am nothing doth
c continue.

c 1 Joh.

15. 16. 17.

1. Cor. 7. 31.

Why so vainely wilt thou bee de-
ceined? It is egregious folly to beg
of a beggar, when he that is rich will
giue abundantly. Euery creature is
but poore to minister comfort vnto
vs; but God which is rich in d mercy,
giueth to all men e liberally; and
reprocheth no man, if thou for thy
part diligently doe f seeke, and pa-
tiently

d Eph. 2. 4.

e 1am. 1. 3.

f Mat. 7. 7.

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tiently expect his leisure.

g Gen. 8.9. Returne, O my soule, returne down vnto Noah in the Arke, euen vnto Christ in thine heart, because it is not good to abide long abroad.

h 1 Ioh. 2. 15. See thou refuse outward comfort, if inwardly thou wilt be refreshed.

i Gen. 8.7. Doe not thou with the Crow abide without the Arke, but with speede auoyd the carkas. Returne thou as hungred, and Christ so will feed thee with the bread of life.

k Ioh. 6. 31. 34. 35.

l 1 Ioh. 2. 15.

If urgent necessitie, or weaknesse hold thee abroade, take heede thou make no stay, but with speede get thee home, least thou bee eitherouerwhelmd with the flood of words, or comprehended in the snares of diuelish temptation.

Many traps are laid for the wandering soule; and great safety hath the quicke returning Dove: which not finding where to set her foote, made hast to come backe vnto Noah in the ship.

Gen. 8.9.

Go thou therefore vnto thy secret place and abide there, yea let it bee a grieue for thee to be elsewhere.

Oh blessed is the soule, which hath a cleere conscience before God, and is not delighted with any

m Mat. 5. 8.

of the Imitation of Christ.

vaineⁿ thing, which is neither polluted with louing anyⁿ thing, nor wearied with extreame^y hating anyⁿ man.

n Luk. 28.
29.30.
o 1 Ioh. 2.
15.16.

Blessed is the soule that seeketh no comfort of creatures, but fixeth all her hope in theⁿ Lord.

p Mat. 5.
22 23. & c.
q Ps. 40.4

Blessed is the soule which refuseth all outward and temporal quietness, and whatsoever belongeth vnto the wellfare of the bodie: and which for the loue of CHRIST doth willing^y embrace both paine and^r power.

r Mat. 10.
29.

Blessed is the soule which commendeth her selfe to God, that hee may doe with her euen as hee thinketh good.

Blessed is the soule which at no time seeketh her owne^r glory, which desireth at no time to haue her own will done: but continually mindeth, loueth, and preferreth the glory and will of God aboue all things.

f Jer. 9. 24.
1 Cor. 1. 31.

Blessed is the soule which doth estrange her selfe from whatsoever^r temporall, and keepeth her selfe pure and vndefiled before God in all herⁿ dealings.

t 1 Ioh. 2.
15.16.
u Ps. 15. 1.2

O reioyce and be thou much glad, thou which art such a soule: for thou mayest

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maist abide in secret and celestiall
cogitations, & so magnifie the Lord
day and night.

Blessed and blessed againe is
 x Colof. 3. soule whose desires are to x heauen
 1.2. ward, whose hands and armes
 y Eze. 1. 1. out-stretched euen as the two wings
 22. of the 7 Cherubins; whose eyes
 x Mat. 5.8. pure to behold 2 God, whose inward
 power and strength doth go along
 ther, and ascend, and returneth
 vntil it haue him whom only she
 ueth before all things. And when
 hath found him, shee followeth
 whither soeuer he will haue her.

And when he speaketh, he reioy
 ceth to heare her make answer, say
 ing; I am thine only beloued, of the
 elected. I am thine exceeding great
 a Gen. 15.3 a reward. Be thou neither proud
 prosperitie, nor impatient in aduer
 tie. Consider how they which loue
 me are comforted of me. How sweet
 ly, thinkest thou, I will intreat thee
 when they shall be receiued vnto
 eternall rest, after that the troubles
 the body and soule are laid aside.

Oh that I enioyed such pleasure
 as doeth the holy soule, when
 shee

of the Imitation of Christ.

senses being a sleep, she is carried aloft, and eleuated aboue her selfe, beloved, and coupled to God by the bond of most hearty friendship! Oh my God, which art the treasure of mine ^b heart, thou knowest right well ^b Mat. 6. 21 how this would bee the onely comfort of mine inward grieffe. But thou art the giuer, & the pourer in of this oyntment.

Thou ^c teachest, thou exhortest, ^c 2 Tim. 3. 16. thou cherishest, thou comfortest, thou carriest, thou vpholdest, thou guidest out and bringest backe, thou doest with the soule whom thou hast chosen, euen as thou wilt, and whatsoeuer thou dost and wilt, it is all good.

But I who am as a sowe vessel, altogether vnworthy to receiue the infusion of thy good spirit, do humbly craue that plentifully it may so spout forth vpon me, that I may both taste the sweetnesse of thine inward loue, and also perceiue those sacred pleasures, the which, I doubt not, the religious soule doth feelee by thy grace.

I did smell the celestiall perfumes afar off, when I did meditate certain inward cogitations of the minde
concer-

The fourth Booke

concerning the soule: but Lord, thou knowest how seldom, how little I do thinke of eternall things, how often words do wither, how rude the understanding, how vnquiet the conscience, how my heart is troubled, darkened, and irreligious, and only through mine owne default.

Notwithstanding, sometime seeking a way vnto spiritual matters, hauing taken my cogitations with me in secret, I begin seriously to call in to my remembrance the good things of the blessed soule; how great are the celestially ioyes, and spiritual delights which are in her heart: what peace, what tranquillitie, what hope, and reioycing in God her Sauiour, whose words be sweet, and face beautiful. And these cogitations, though short, they endure, yet when they come, blessed is the houre.

And I thus thinking, and thou enlightning my darkenes, I do find my complaints vpon my selfe, & by thy quicke holes of grace, I perceiue how such and such is the soule inwardly vnited vnto thee, and that so and so thou hast spoken to her.

She is still from all things sensible

of the Imitation of Christ.

and thou in the spirit speakest to her
of inuisible matters.

Shee seemeth as it were to be for-
saken of all creatures, and after an
vnspokeable maner thou dost com-
fort her.

So that I said againe in my heart,
Wo to the sinfull soule, to the grie-
ued conscience, to the man which
is neither hot nor cold, destitute of
the light of grace, and of spirituall
comfort, seeking teares, and yet fin-
ding none.

But peace bee to him which vnsci-
encedly doth loue Christ, and neuer
turneth aside the eyes of his heart
from his Sauour: but continually
seeketh the things which are plea-
sing in his eyes.

For he shall walke in peace and e-
quie, and no stranger shall partici-
pate of his pleasure. He shall well per-
ceiue that his rest is good, and taste
how sweet his Lord God is, in whom
hee trusteth. He shall set him farre
from outward tumults, and with
heartie desire expect his prosperous
coming. Lo, thus worketh the Lord
in his elected vessels.

Hee which commeth vnto him,
shall not returne emptie away: for
cheere-

c Deu. 27.

26

Gal. 3. 10.

d Pro. 3. 33.

& 24. 19.

e Ren. 3.

15. 16.

f Col. 3. 3.

g Psal. 14.

The fourth booke

Mat. 25.
35.

cheerefully hee bestoweth vpon the
thirsty drinke, and bread vpon the
hungry.

O my God, when thou entrest in
to the house of the soule which lo-
ueth thee, wilt thou not feede her
with thy milke? yea, and bring her
sometime beside her selfe, through
thine abundant sweetnesse, to the re-
minding of thee without any corporall
similitude.

O truth, truth, of what force and
power is loue!

Then wilt thou speak thy word
to her all secretly, and shew the thing
that shall be, and haue bene in me
happy charitie, and fruition, where
the words of man shall no more be
heard.

From henceforth thou wilt cause
her no whit to doubt any more of e-
ternall rest, and of the fellowship of
Saints: but now by deferring the to-
ken of speciall grace, thou makest her
the more able to hope for the things
she seeth not, and to despise present
things which by sense thee compre-
hendeth.

Ro. 8. 24.

O mercifull God, be mindefull of
me a poore beggar, euen of thy great
mercy; and send the true be-
nefit

1 Cor. 1. 3

of the Imitation of Christ.

from ¹heauen, thy good word so full
of comfort and grace.

1 Ioh. 6. 31.
32. & c.]

CHAP. XI.

1. That all comfort, and pleasures
are in God. 2. A prayer that all peo-
ple may glorifie the Lord. 3. The
blessed state of good men. 4. That
wee are to bee ready against
the comming of our
Saviour Christ.



*Al my bones shall say,
Lord, who is like vnto
thee?*

There is ^b one, and
like to him there is
none, euen my God it ^dis, to whom,
whatsoeuer is compared, is ^e no-
thing.

a Psa. 39. 10
b Deut. 6. 4
c 1 Ki. 8. 23
d Ioh. 20. 17
e Pro. 3. 15.
I say 46. 9.

My God is entirely to bee loued,
and a most faithfull friend, which ne-
uer forsaketh the soule that loueth
him, but continually abideth with
her for company. And if sometime
he hide himselfe, and suffer her to be
doubled, it is not done of him to de-
roy, but to try ^eher, to purge ^hher,
and to instruct ⁱher, so that euen
when hee forsaketh not, but the more
safely instructeth, that euery one
may

f Ioh. 13. 3

g Iam. 1. 12
h Wis 3. 6.
i Psa. 119. 71

The fourth Booke

may see what hee is of himselfe,
how farre he is come forward (in
ligion.)

O my beloved, thou art all fair
lously, but not to the flesh, but to
minde: nor to the eye or sense, but
the faithful soule; to him which is
a pure heart^k; to him which is
together addicted vnto things inu
and spirituallⁱ.

^k Mat. 5. 8.

ⁱ 2 Cor. 4.

18

So that whoso desireth to be
red to thee by a religious affect
he must of necessity mortifie in
selfe all fleshly motions, and
all retain a pure conscience. For
art much displeased then, when
doth go vnto fraile creatures to
consolation.

And therefore thou callest me
wardly to loue thee^m, and
commandest that I waite for thee
for then I shall finde thee, when I
humble my self, and with that which
thou wilt.

^m Luke 14.

27.

And this shall be all my felicity
euen freely to serue thee, ne
dreading any losse, nor seeking
gaine: because thou allowest
soule which purely doth loue

ⁿ Mat. 10. 7

Oh blessed is hee, which both
life and death sticketh only to

the Imitation of Christ.

But as for me I am far away cast
 oftentimes from thy favour by lodging
 and that both inordinately, and un-
 discreetly, transitorie things. But that
 I may not perish with them, I with all
 speede will returne, and behold in
 thee thy glorie, and direct all my
 cogitations to thee ward.
 O my Lord, & God, which of no-
 thing hast made all things, give
 me grace for all things to praise thy
 name.
 For all power, wisdom, good-
 ness, & mercy, is thine; thine also is
 everlasting glorie and maiestie.
 Thy kingdome is an everlasting
 kingdome; and thy dominion indu-
 eth throughout all ages.
 Thou orderest all things, both
 things above, and things under.
 Thou knowest all things, and
 possessest all things; nothing doth
 resist, or trouble thee: but quietly
 thou rulest the world, and makest the
 rebellious to steepe, and to serue.
 Thou art privie to all things which
 are done in the world, and before
 they were done thou knewest their
 ends.
 Thou art the God both of heaven
 and earth, the creatour of things
 visible

11. 1. 2. 3. 4.
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 100. 1. 2. 3. 4.

The fourth booke

f Ps. 39. 11 visible and inuisible f, the gouernour
Pg. 115. 15. of the whole world, and the dispo-
g Ps. 47. 1 ser of the seasons.

2. 6. &c. O blasse thy seruants, I beseech
h Eccle. 43 thee, dispersed far and wide ouer the
3. 6. &c. world, yet seruing thee most religi-
ously. Make them (constantly) re-
sound forth thy praise, and in all pla-
ces with one voice to glorify thy
name.

Stir vp their hearts firmly to loue
thee; and graunt that all their enter-
prises may take a good ende.

Oh, how gracious, and how good
art thou to such as loue thee! how
sweete art thou to them which taste
thee!

They which haue smelt thy sweet-
nes, know thereby the better how
both to thinke and speake. For thy
sweetnesse surpasseth all sweetnesse,
and thy pleasures doe sweeten all be-
ternesse.

O Lord my God, holic men haue
spoken, and Prophets haue talked
of thee.

All the godlie from the world
beginning haue beleened in thee,
haue serued thee, haue glorified
thee both with sacrifices and obla-
tions, they haue praised and ble-
ssed thee.

of the Imitation of Christ.

thine holy name : because they haue both acknowledged thee to bee the Creator and maker of the vniuersall world, and also trusted in thee aboue all things 1.

1 Heb. 11. 3
3. & c.

They haue knowne thee in their visions, for thou hast reuealed thy name to them; and beside thee they knewe no God. They obserued the lawe of thy commandements, which thou gauest them.

They followed not the foolish imaginations of false gods : but they worshipped thee which livest for euer, the Creator of all things 2.

m 1. Tim. 8

They lifted vp their voice to thee with thanksgiving : because from on high thou soundest in their eares, saying, I am that I am. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there bee after mee. I haue ordained the things which shall bee, and I forget not what soeuer is past.

17. 1. 17.

n A. 17.

24.

Heb. 1. 3.

o Ex. 3. 14.

p Isa. 43. 27.

This when they heard, and vnderstood, they cast the cies of their faith as farre off, beleeuing that God will keepe vs, and that he which shall come, will come, and will not tarry.

q Heb. 10. 37

Knowing these things afore hand they were not a little comforted, and

The fourth booke

maruellously astonished, at the presence of the glorie to come; they fainted. But afterward comming a little and little to themselves, & with ioy beholding the power of God preaching, they saide, He is, euen he is the Lord our God; and we haue none other. Hee hath taken vs, and hee will saue vs. Hee cannot deceiue himselfe; because hee is faithful.

p. 2. Tim. 2.

13.

f. 1 Iohn. v.

1.3.

t Ioh. 3. 18.

u. m. T. 2.

u. Psa. 33. 9.

7. I say. 46.

10.

7. Psa. 33. 10.

4. Ex. 1. 14.

2. Mich. 1.

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As we haue heard, so we haue seen; as we haue beleued, so wee haue spoken; and borne witness to the truth.

Once the Lord dispeake, and it was done. Hee said, My counsaile shall stand; but yours shall come to nought. O ye sonnes of men, woe vnto them which imagine euill; and afterward make a teoche at the word of God.

Woe vnto you which doe faigne religion out of your owne braine, and are exalted in your owne power.

Hear the Word of the Lord, ye which serue the Lord: know ye, that he hath a controuersie with the inhabitants of the earth.

a. Hof. 4. 1.

To turne away your selues, is not good; stand yee therefore and confesse.

of the Imitation of Christ.

consider his waies, and your desire

Reuerne you and come vnto him,
so will hee ioyfully receiue you into
fauour; for the Lord is gracious and
mercifull.

b Ex. 32.6.

Hee keepeth not his anger as man
doth; but pardoneth all finnes, yea
and moreouer he restoreth the for-
mer grace with the later.

c Iona. 4.2.

Hos. 11.9.

Onely returne you with all your
hearts: and dedicate your selues whol-
lie and vnfainedly to his seruice.

Thus doe the Saints speake in mine
eares.

That which musick is as a banquet,
and sweete smelling frankincense in
a censer: euen that is the word of
God in a pure heart.

And thy Saints, Lord, filled with
thy Spirit, haue thus sounded forth
the memorie of thine abundance
sweetnes; and haue left their words
vnto vs to be sounded abroade.

But my speech oftentime is stop-
ped, so that it hath no passage to
goe. But if that fire come from a-
bove, then shall my tongue be kindled
it once be inflamed; I shall burne
with be consumed.

I shall not be able to stand in the
presence thereof.

The fourth booke

driveth away chaffe, so shall sorrow
expelled from the heart. And as the
rust by the fire : so shall my sinnes
consumed.

The fire of God which consumeth
all things, shall sweepe the floor of
mans heart. Descend, and geve
touch mee a little, and I shall live.

Things passed shall be as though
they had neuer beene, and that
come shall not be accompted of; for
all sinnes shall vtterly be forgotten.
Old things shall passe away, new
shall come abundantly; holie desires
shall increase, and rise vp on all sides
wheresoeuer the good spirit shall
blowe.

Fear shall depart, loue shall possesse
the hearts of all; all affliction shall
cease: for this alteration is by the
hand of God.

Therefore that which I say, is not
to mine owne but to his praise.

The penfune hath comfort, the hun-
gry, bread; the thirstie, drinke;

The sick are healed; the weary
assisted; the weak strengthened; the
wearie quieted; the hopelesse com-
forted; the complainer pitied;

To the blinde sight; to the way-
wandering a ready way; to the knoe-

Chap. vi. 77 The happy state of good men.
of the Imitation of Christ

the gate is opened;

He which doubted, is now resolved; he which staggered, is now strengthened; he that diligently enquired, is now entertained ioyfully by mother charitie. The friend cometh more ioyfully to meete, than is the soule desirous to speake with him.

Lo now am I present, saith hee, say L. on, what newe thing hath fallen out? What, haue you forgotten what you are to suffer and to doe for my sake?

Yet this staied me not, being desirous to goe forward with him. So straight-way I mounted a loft, and forgot all mine affliction.

He would not by and by discomfort the partie so longing to abide with him: but with gentle words he said, that in due time it should bee performed.

Thy desire is good, and request vn- to mee doth like me well: notwithstanding, it may not presently bee graunted.

Go thy way, and get home to thine owne house, and declare to thine acquaintance what the Lord hath done for thee.

Saie vnto them, Prepare your
B 4 hearts

The fourth booke.

hearts every one of you; and
downe the heauey burden of sinne
and be ye warie, and strong to resist

1. Jam. 4. 7. the threes of Satan.

2. Watch and pray, lest ye fall into

3. Mat. 26. temptation.

4. Mark. 14. I will come shortly, looke therefore

5. 38. finde you readie.

Lo, I haue warned you aforehand.

Chap. 1.

1. The desire of the soule after God.

2. The properties of God by the sundry

3. titles ascribed vnto him.

4. None

5. can commeth vnto God, vnlesse

6. God draweth him.

7. Psal. 33. 3.

8. Oh, of what excellencie

9. art thou, my soule,

10. what wonderful vertue

11. is hidden in thee, that thou canst

12. neuer be at rest, vnill thou haue attained

13. perfect happines, and found the

14. last end which thou so desirest, which

15. once being knowen and found out,

16. the care is gone.

17. Oh happinesse aboue all happinesse,

18. and without end.

of the Imitation of Christ.

both without measure, & eueralsting-
ly inioy thee?

I finde many good things in this
world. But they continue not, nei-
ther doe they satisfie my desire.

But one thing is necessarie. This
one thing is that I seeke; this one
thing I desire.

For one thing are all things; and
of one thing are all things. And if I
enioy it not, I shall continually be
tossed, because many things cannot
satisfie me.

What is this one thing? I am not
able to say what it is; sure I am I de-
sire that, than which, nothing either
is or may be imagined either better
or greater.

For this is not one thing among
many things; but one thing about
all things. And it is my G O D to
whom if I sticke, I shall doe well.

To him I say, to him I cry, when I
say, Say vnto my soule, I am thy salua-
tion.

O my soule, my longing soule,
what more desirest thou? Is it not
better for thee to cleaue vnto one
thing, than vnto many things? Of
one thing are many things; but

b 1. Cor. 7.

31.

1. Iohn. 1.

15. 16.

c Eccles. 1.

8.

d Luc. 10.

23. 1. 2. 7.

e. Isai. 43. 7.

f Gen. 1. 1.

2. & c.

Iohn. 1. 1. 3.

g Esa. 46. 5.

6. & c.

Iob 41. 2.

2. & c.

h Ezra. 7. 12.

i Psal. 73. 5.

k Psal. 15. 3.

The fourth booke

one thing is not of many things.

Cease, o seeke many things, ioyne thee to one, stick vnto one: for in one thing all things consist.

Let others enquire after manifold and diuers outward things: but doe thou seeke one inward good thing, and it is sufficient.

Mat. 22. 5

Euk. 14. 18.

Lo, this man seeketh a farme: that man trauelleth about his merchandise, another heapeth vp much gold and siluer, another hunteth after pleasures and preferment, another visiteth his friends and kindred, another is merrie with his acquaintance, another rideth vnto cities and castles, another dooth longe to see diuers countries of the world, another desireth wisdome, another preferment, another principallie, another a kingdome: and thus one wisheth one thing, another man another thing, euen as well among the spiritual sort, as among the secular. But few doe thinke one thing, and (othor things) purely and simply for one thing. And therefore they neither doe finde any sure peace, nor yet fauor the inward grace of the spirit.

For so many as are (the seruants)

of the Imitation of Christ.

of Christ, doe couet not temporall,
nor earthly things^a, as though they w^e Col. 3.2
were then iolly & glorious fellows,
if they abounded therewith.

What then? Wilt thou say that the
things which they seeke for, do touch
thee, O deuout soule? in truth thou
canst not.

For my part, I detest all these things:
for my good thing is but one thing. I
loue but one thing, I require but one
thing: and this one thing is better to
me than all other things either in
heaven or in earth.

If thou hast found such a good
thing, my counsell is, that you hold
and keepe it for whose sake you haue
contemned all things. For hauing
that, it shall not grieue you to want
other things: nay, you will iudge it
reason for the getting thereof, that
you doe both giue^a, and suffer all
things^b.

Phil. 3.8.
Rem. 8.35.

Now therefore, O my soule, seeke
thou after so singular, and superex-
cellent a good thing.

So long as you liue in the flesh, you
see of necessity to seeke: because that
cannot too carefally bee sought for,
which can at no time sufficiently be
comprehended.

1 Cor. 13.

But

The fourth Booke

But then shall you cease seeking
when the houre of enioying is come.
For then shall he be all in all
euen hee which alone is all-sufficient
for all, and every man.

And although there, too, he may
be sought, where hee is continually
found: yet is hee not there sought
with labor, as in this world, but with
surpassing pleasure, and love.

What he is in this life to the godly,
it may bee declared by his manifest
Titles: and such as haue experienced
(of his goodnes) knowe very well
how it may be shewen.
Notwithstanding, consider what
the names of God are, as I haue lea-
rned them in the schoole of experi-
ence: I will recite a few, but the grace
(of his Spirit) may put you in mind
of many more beside.

Hee is a Spouse, to such as
loue; but to such as still serue him
in feare, a dreadfull Lord.

Hee is a Father to good children,
but to the obstinately wicked,
a severe Iudger.

To the sick, he is a Physician.

To the whole, wholesome food.

To the ignorant, a teacher.
To the obedient, an everlasting

of the Imitation of Christ.

c. Mat. 1. 28

Hee is the way ^d for beginners, ^d Ioh. 14. 6
 the truth for proceeders, the ^e life ^e Ioh. 11. 25
 for the absolute performers of his ho-
 ly will.

f Col. 1. 27

Hee is the hope ^f of repenters, and ⁱ Tim. 1. 1
 a surpassing comforter ^g of the right- ^g Ioh. 14.
 teous. 26.

He is a crowne ^h for the humble, ^h Luk. 2. 32
 and a punishment ⁱ for the proude. ⁱ Ro. 9. 33.

In darknes hee is a light ^k; and in ^k Ioh. 1. 8. 9
 the night a lanterne ^l. ^l Iohn 3. 19

Hee giueth medicine to the disea- ¹ Ioh. 8. 32
 sed soules; and much wine of com- ¹ Iohn. 1. 5
 fort, to the sorrowfull. ² 1. 3. dol 4

With such as stand to the battell,
 he standeth; with such as proceede
 in their iourney, he walketh; with such
 as feruently make haste, hee run-
 neth; with such as mount in diuine
 contemplation, he flieth.

Doe you pray? he is present with
 you. Doe you reade? he is talking
 with you. Doe you meditate? hee is
 still with you.

One and the same GOD worketh
 all these things, shewing himselfe
 to every one, euen as hee thinketh
 good: in his words there is no fault,
 and his works are past finding out.

For great and vnsearchable are
 his

The fourth booke

m Ro. 11. 33. his iudgements ^m; & no man is to
vnto him, Why doost thou so? or why
doost thou chuse this man rather than
that? **Isay. 41.** that man?

9. 10. 11. It is folly for a man to reason
Rom. 9. 20. against the Almighty: and all the will
21, &c. of Adams children is vaine, and to
no purpose.

How like you these things, & how
dooth God saue you?

S. He seemeth sweete vnto me; nei-
ther am I offended at his workes.

o Psal. 19. He is righteous, and who can
137. rebuke him of ill dealing?

p Ioh. 8. 56 He that so dooth, dooth set him-
self against God, and shall be repro-
ued of his irreprehensible light.

M. But what thou hast heard, what
it in his presence? scarce vndoubt-
ly so much as a sparke, without that
which is hidden within.

Aske you what that is? I must say,
I knowe it not, it is altogether above
my capacitie, euen as a certain cloud
far off, whose beginning and end are
vnknowne.

And therefore meditate rather, &
thinke more often vpon the base hu-
manitie of Iesus, and do not mount
vp too high, lest of his glorious ma-
iestie you be confounded,

But, forſomuch as burning loue
dooth now and then forget all reue-
rence and feare, you are (in that re-
ſpect) the more to be borne withall,
if ſometime, being extreameſly ſet on
fire with the loue of Ieſus, you doe
conſider not onely how hee cried in
the manger ^q, and how hee hanged ^r
vpon the croſſe ^t: but alſo how hee ^q Luk. 2. 6.
reigneth now in heauen all glorious. ^r Mat. 27.
ly ^s, and ruleth all things vnder hea- ^{31. 32. &c.}
uen moſt wonderfully ^t. ^{Ph. 2. 9. 10}
^r Rev. 1. 5.

• Luk.2.6.

Mat. 27.

31. 32. &c.

PH.2.9.10

• Recd. 1.5.

O most lonely Iesu, gladly doe I s.
follow thee in earth: but more glad-
lie would I follow thee vnto heauen.

Where my treasure is, there would
mine heart be also.

Oh, thou art my treasure, thou ^a Mat. 6. 25
which art at the right hand of the fa-
ther, art dearer vnto mee than any
creature. For my sake thou wert in-
carnate, for my sake thou wast ele-
uate. ^x Ro. 8. 34.
^{Heb. 1. 3.}

№ Кв. 8.34.

Heb. 1, 3.

Thou diddest leaue thy selfe an ex-
ample vpon earth; thou keepest thy
selfe for a reward in the heauens.

ylah. 13.15

1. Pet. 2:21.

Vpon thee therefore mine eyes are
fixed, and after thee doe my desire
goe. To thee mine heart saith, My
face seeketh thee O Lord, I will con-
tinually seeke thy face.

2 Pfa. 27.8

The fourth Booke

O Lord, how long wilt thou hide
the sight of thy glorie? Why hide
a Job. 13. thou thy face, and takest mee
24. from mine enemy?

Thou knowest right well, my mind
will be distracted hither and thither
and bee diuersly bent, vntill it be
ioyned to thee her friend in hea-
uens.

For the force of loue knoweth
b Sal. S. 8. how to bee quiet, but vnceasingly
6.7. maketh inquirie of her louer, send-
eth forth messengers, and doubled
prayers: neither doth it so giue out,
because loue will altogether possesse
that which it desireth.

Therefore drawe mee, that
c Sal. S. 1.3. I may begin zealouslie to runne after
thee. I had neede to be drawne, and
with great force to be drawne. For
x Ro. 8. 14. vnlesse thou draw, none will come,
d Job. 4. 4. none will follow: because every man
is naturally inclined to himselfe
ward.

But if thou once drawe, lo then I
doo hasten, then I run, then I wait
not. But if thou dost not drawe, I doe
neither runne, nor seeke, nor follow
thee. If any desire at all to followe
thee, thou reach out thine hand, I doe
run so much the more swiftly,

of the Imitation of Christ.

Thou forcibly dost draw.

This is the voice of my loue draw-
ing. And when I am lift up from the
earth, I will draw all men unto mee.

e Iohn. 12.
2.3.

O sweete Iesu, draw me after thee:
and then not I onely, but all shall run
after thee by the shadow of thine
countenances.

f Sal. S. 1.
32.

First there fort drawe me after thee,
then let others follow, seeing an ex-
ample of good life.

But, that we may not waxe proud,
it is good that we marke this withall,
how that wee began to runne, not
through our owne strength, but by
the fauour of thine ordinance.

This is the heauenly drawing,

without which no man can goe for-
ward, no matter so much as beginning as

g Ioh. 6.44

likewise thou diddest say, I will draw
all men unto mee, by the shadow of thine
countenances.

So that whom the father draweth,
he followeth thee, and forsaketh him-
self.

And he himselfe be well drawne that

h Mat. 8.19
Luk. 9.77.

saith, I will follow thee. But curie one
hath not the gilt to bee so affected:

neither is it a weak & mock that can
so readily follow thee in all things.

What

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What lette hast thou O my soul
that thou dost not forsake all for
his sake? why so vnwillingly doe
depart from vaine and transitory
things? What good can these world
things doe you?

Beholde, while you passe by
all things, and visible creatures,
lingring to delight your selfe in them,
forget better things. While you
doe, you seuer your selfe from the
ueraine good thing, and turne your
minde from the true, blessed, and
eternaall life.

And therefore you shall continue
miserable and wretched, full of griefe

[Eccle. 3. 17 and vexation.]

For turne your selfe on which
you will, and you shall finde more
of continuall sorrow, and much
trouaile, vntill thou turne againe
to thy creator, because he is thy peace
and secure quietnesse.

But, if thou neither make staie
in earthly things, nor fasten thy foot
in the mire, but rather bebolde
worship in the glasse of worldly crea
tures, not the figure which passeth
waie, but him whose image and
perscription it is, blessed art thou,
thou shalt neuer die.

1 Cor. 7. 31

1 Th. 2. 14

For when thou seekest after these
 visible things not to enjoy them,
 but beholdest them to the ende to
 glorifie the name of thy Creator, by
 making to thy selfe of his best and
 best works a kind of a ladder where-
 withall thou maiest ascend, thou
 shalt be deliuered so from thy filthie
 howels of this world, and throughly
 be coupled to thy desired ende,
 which is aboue all things
 the blessed God for
 ever and euer.



chap.

The fourth Booke

CHAP. 13.

1. How, and when the soule and
are united together. 2. The miserie

where God is not
present.

a Psal. 63. 8.



T Soule cleaveth
thee?

O my God, the
comforter, the
knowest how thou
kest me well, and how

I take pleasure daily to be talking
with thee secretly alone.

But where may I seeke thee, if hap-
pely I doe misse thee for an hour
who shall bring me unto thee?

b I say 46. 9.

Thou art God above all things
and I beneath all things a miserable
man. Thou art in heaven, & I in
world. Thou art most high, but I am
poore and a beggar.

c Mat. 6. 9.

Who euer hath measured the
stance betweene heauen and earth
Far asunder bee they, but farther
thou from me, O God.

Who therefore shall vnite mee
thee? either thou must doe it, or
can,

of the Imitation of Christ.

But if thou wilt, it may speedily be done. And thou knowest, how of my selfe I may easily fall: but that I doe stand, and goe forward, it is of thy goodnes.

So that my soule dependeth vpon the grace of thy spirit, and of the infusion of thy speciall fauour.

If thou command, it shall be lifted from the earth: but if thou turne away thy face, it shall be greatly troubled.

But of thy wonted fauor and mercie receiue mee, & see thy right hand guide me wonderfully vnto thee.

Hear this, all yee people, giue Psal. 49. 1
are all yee that dwell in the world; for it is an easie thing with God to bring it to passe, as it is written, that the rich and poore may be all one.

I am poore, and lack many things; but this my God is rich, and wanteth nothing.

And although no great experience, yet I haue an vndoubted testimony to prooue that the soule through grace may bee vnitied to God.

My beloved is mine, saith he, and f. Sal. 5. 2.
I am his, he feedeth among the lilies. 16.

This

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This is the testimony of the friend
& his darling; of the bridegroom
and the spouse: and it is a verie
and a strong testimonie of the
law.

Ioh. 17. 21 The next is like to this & I will
they all may be one, as thou, O father
art in mee, and I in thee.

Behold the notable testimonie
two books, whereby it plainly app
reth, that the soule, through spe
grace from aboue, may be linked
miliarly vnto God.

And although it rarely comes fo
passe: yet is it dearely to be acc
ted of, and not altogether vnknow
to the louer. And againe, though
sie hardly: yet may it fall out.

The soule therefore so conioyned
to God, let no man dare to separa
or to trouble.

If thou dost wonder at this
melous vnion, wonder thou and mar
uel at the excellencie of his goodnes
and at the strange & singular vnion
of the humane bodie (to his God
head.)

He may doe what he will, which
h Ps. 136. 4. onely doth great wonders.

If thou lookest for merits,

of the Imitation of Christ.

shall finde, it is his good pleasure to
doe as it so.

O sweet societie with Christ, and
under the wings of Christ!

O gracious coniunction, full of
love, and sweetness of the holy ghost;
the which is perceived better than
uttered!

These things belong vnto the soule
that is estranged from all worldly
manners, and is not delighted with
his present life: but is carried aloft
in godly meditation.

The more the lower knoweth this,
the more am I ignorant. Notwith-
standing, gladly would I be in pre-
sence when the deuout soule is in such
a happie case.

And then is she so, when the spouse
and she is together at the noone day.

But then it fareth ill with her, and
that verie ill too, if it happen that
Jesus bee away; if the perfumes of
grace run not from aboue; if no plea-
sure she take in the holy Bible; if it
bee likesome for her to continue in
prayer and godly meditation; if the
clouds of the heart be so thicke, and
heartfull cogitations doe so preuaile,
that they cannot be restrained, but
do labor to ouerwhelme in a maner

all

The fourth Booke

all the former good things.

O Lord God, why dost thou
What plaie is this? O blessed life
what meane you heereby?

If it were not offensive to thy
honour, I could wish to haue farther
communication betwene thee and
thy beloved.

For so much as thee is so great
desirous of thy glorious presence
whereby thee may be nourished with
chaste delights, I doe much
wonder why sometime you suffer her
so desolate. Thou passest by, and
leavest thy way, as though shee had
desire vnto thee. But she is alone
pensive. For thus she saith in effect.

i Isa. 26. 9.

With my soule haue I desired thee in
night.

It is night with her, when thou
the true light art not present, so
that shee prayeth for thy presence
that the darknesse of sinne com-
mend her not. For shee feeleth man-
fold discomforts when thy
glorious visitation, is taken from her.
For, had she not suffered some want
she had neuer so earnestly cried vnto
thee.

Another also, which was before
i Psal. 63. 3. saide cried thus, My soule clea-

unto thee.

But I thinke no trouble is or seemeth so troublesome to her, as the want of thy presence.

And no maruel, if through this want the weiward soule doe languish away in sorrow. For thou art verie hardly found at any time : and being found, she reioyceth at thy returne, hoping to spend the day merily with thee: but thinking little of thy departure, she suspected no aduersitie to come. Busy handling another matter secretly, thou often takest thy flight.

For thou departest suddainly out of her hands, when shee cannot lay hold vpon thee.

I doe praise thee : but in this how shall I praise thee ? if thou hast any praise and sweetnesse, why doe you seeme to forgoe it in this deed ?

If thou wert not, she might be offended. But shee can take none offence at thee, who so mightily doth loue her.

If therefore any good reason bee signified vnder that lesion, O God shew it me.

For gladly would I vnderstand the same: neither doe I thinke it vnnes-

The fourth booke

farie to learne, though it be but little.

Because no man of himselfe can behold thy secret iudgements: but it is thy light w^{ch} dooth both inlighten darke, and drine away hurtfull things.

What therefore may the cause bee that sometime so secretly you withdraw your selfe from the soule, thee not witting thereof?

Doe you loue her, or no? If you doe loue her, why then do you leaue her, my beloued? If you loue her not, why then haue you visited her before time? Againe, if you loue her not, why doe you make returne? why knocke you at the doore? why enter you in again? What, is it of lightheart that you do so both goe and returne? God forbid.

But so often change dooth not a little grieue her; yea much it dooth disquiet her. Yet the grieve would be the lesser, if thou wouldest say plainly,

Ioh. 14. 28 *lie, I doe goe, and will come vnto you; your hearts shall reioyce, and your ioy shall be full.*
m Ioh. 15. 22 *no man shall take from you.*

But now you cast out neuer a word; onely thee thinketh vpon the speech, which she well perceiueth to be performed in her selfe, how Ioh.

of the Imitation of Christ.

hid himselfe, and went out of the Temple ^a.

^a Ioh. 8. 59.

A few things I haue against you, but my complaint doth spring out of a good roote. I humbly request to be instructed, I loue not to contend.

And therefore when occasion ferueth, make answer I beseech you.

Also let the godly soulesay for her selfe somewhat for her learning.

Likewise make you answer boldly when your part requireth.

O my soule, answer thou thy beloued boldly. For thy friend will patiently heare, and meete thee with milde words, that you may suffer none hinderance.

For if hee bee not thy comforter, who will comfort thee? And who more sauourably will beare thine infirmitie, than hee which beareth all things, & yet is not burdened? And to whom more safely can you reuale your miserie, than to him w^{ch} perfectly knowes all things? Or in whom may you put more confidence, than in the truth which deceiweth not.

^a Eccles.

23. 19.

^p Ioh. 6. 14.

Now, if any stranger, or one that is not a friend to the spouse, shall heare these things, let him be driuen

The fourth booke

from the doorgs.* But if hee loue the spouse, if hee be faithfull, if deuoure spirituall, let him haue free ingresse.

If hee bee a keeper of good conscience, a louer of vertue and discipline; if hee be pure in heart, and cleere in iudgement; if humble in himselfe, and good towards others; he can neither wickedly carpe & vainely extol, rashly reprocue, impudently maintaine, nor proudly commend things; but contrariwise, if he haue learned, both the things which he conceiueth nor, to reuerence, and also rightly to interpret obscure and mysticall matters, let him haue entrance, and heare the communication. For the affection of the heart through the sound of words, ought to bee noted, rather than the qualitie of voyces.

And therefore tell me, O soule, how dost thou feel thy selfe, wanting the grace of thy beloued? I for my part do see that hardly I can take well, if he keepe himselfe long away, and I conceiue the like of you.

If you thinke good, let vs sit heere together, and conferre wee hereof our comfort.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 14.

1. A lamentation of the soule for
the want of grace.

Mine heart breaketh
for desire.

Ps. 117. 20

What is't thou saist?
Why saist thou, Zi-
on, the Lord hath
forsaken me?

Feare not daughter Sion, thou lo-
ving & religious soule: lo thy king, &
welbeloued friend commeth to thee.

Arise, stand vp, and behold the ioy
which commeth toward thee from
thy God.

S. I haue sought, saith the soule, &
haue not found^b, I haue called, and^b
he hath not answered, and therefore
I doe breake for thought.

Can. 5. 2

M Then said I, this is the voyce of
the Turtle hauing lost her mate.

It is not now with you as it was
yesterday, and yerwhile, when you
sang the songs of myrth.

S. The morning is past, night com-
meth, and the sponse resteth him-
selfe at noone tide: yet may I not

The fourth booke

come nigh him.

M. Your words are sorrowfull, and your eyes shed teares. O soule, thou art grieved, and hast neede of comfort. But speake, whence commeth your grieve?

S. I am not troubled either for gold or siluer, or any worldly matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for iniurie, nor for pouertie, for I am now dead & crucified to the world.

M. If I be not deceiued, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectly you haue denied the same, and are come euen vnto a verie hatred of your selfe, I would faine know.

S. Verie fewe haue that gift, and it is especially looked for at your hands.

M. Why therefore are you so pensive? What haue you forgone? If it be for your friend his sake, I must needs confesse you doe well to be sad: neither should you take delight in any thing, vntill he returne, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doe you sustaine your selfe vpon the beloued, O sweet soule?

And sure I am hee is not alway
present

of the Imitation of Christ.

present at a with. Therefore while he is absent, what comfort haue you, wherein doe you take delight?

Tell me your secrets, bee they neuer so grievous.

That you beare the absence of Christ heauily, no man doubteth, but he onely that loueth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for this world, but for the spouse Christ. And I know full well that when hee shall returne, you will be merry againe: because hee will not alwaies forget you. For he hath said ^e, I will not leaue you comfortlesse, but I will come to you. e Ioh. 14. 18

Therefore your words are not vain, beeing vttered with such griefe, but they declare a louing heart, and strike the cold affection, which is not inflamed with the loue of Christ.

For your voice, is the voice of a Turtle, not the crying of a murmurer. And therefore I trust, you shall finde him, whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding I demand, What say you of him, whose absence you do so bewaile? is he good, or no?

S. Doubtlesse hee is good, and singularlie good too ^d, righteous, and d Mat. 19.

The fourth booke

come nigh him.

M. Your words are sorrowfull, and your eyes shed teares. O soule, thou art grieued, and hast neede of comfort. But speake, whence commeth your grieve?

S. I am not troubled either for gold or siluer, or any worldly matter, neither for lucre, nor for hurt, neither for iniurie, nor for pouertie, for I am now dead & crucified to the world.

M. If I be not deceiued, long since you renounced the world. But whether in all things perfectly you haue denied the same, and are come euen vnto a verie hatred of your selfe, I would faine know.

S. Verie fewe haue that gift, and it is especially looked for at your hands.

M. Why therefore are you so pen-siue? What haue you forgone? If it be for your friend his sake, I must needs confesse you doe well to be sad: neither should you take delight in any thing, vntill he returne, and visit you againe.

But in the meane while, how doe you sustaine your selfe vpon the beloued, O sweet soule?

And sure I am hee is not alway present

of the Imitation of Christ.

present at a with. Therefore while he is absent, what comfort haue you, wherein doe you take delight?

Tell me your secrets, bee they neuer so grieuous.

That you beare the absence of Christ heauily, no man doubteth, but he onely that loueth not.

Now you are sad, I take it, not for this world, but for the spouse Christ. And I know full well that when hee shall returne, you will be merry againe: because hee will not alwaies forget you. For he hath said ^{e Ioh. 14.18}, *I will not leave you comfortlesse, but I will come to you.*

Therefore your words are not vain, beeing vttered with such griefe, but they declare a louing heart, and strike the cold affection, which is not inflamed with the loue of Christ.

For your voice, is the voice of a Turtle, not the crying of a murmurer. And therefore I trust, you shall finde him, whose losse you so lament.

Notwithstanding I demand, What say you of him, whose absence you do so bewaile? is he good, or no?

5. Doubtlesse hee is good, and singularlie good too^d, righteous, and ^{d Mat. 29:}

The fourth Booke

faithfull, in him there is no wicked-
nesse, neither can bee.

e Iob. 34. 10

f 1. Pet. 2.

22.

M. Why therefore lament you for
the good, in whom is no deceit?

S. I weep not for the good, in respect
that hee is good: but I lament mine
owne miserable condition, because I
haue lost a good and faithfull friend.

I, euen I haue deserued this: but
alas, alas that I kept not his fauor.

By the lacke, I haue now learned
what I haue lost. And the absence of
a friend sheweth, what his presence
did good.

I was merrie and iocund with him:
but I did no whit consider of his
speedy departure.

He came skipping vpon the moun-
taines, hee was ioyfull and iocund in
the porches of mine house. And
straightway I vnlocked the doores of
the flesh, and let in the beloued vnto
me. I did sit, and rested within vnder
his shadow from the haile and raine.
And it did me much good to haue
his company.

Why should I not reioyce? He is
my ioye, and the comfort of mine
heart.

Ah, what had I? And what then
did

of the Imitation of Christ.

did I possesse?

I am not able to vtter, how well I prospered then: neither is it conuenient that I should. I could not desire more than I had, hee being present whom alone I loued.

Oh, how did I loue, when I despised both my selfe, and all things beside.

I had either little or no care at all of any thing that might delight me, for I was rauished with loue of him, and whatsoeuer was not my beloued, I loathed as altogether vnfauorite. But he being taken away, I am in a manner cleane out of heart.

For my soule depended vpon his grace, because I had none other comfort besides him, whose absence I do thus lament. He did content me, and was sufficient to the making of true mirth indeed.

As I would, so was he, and whatsoeuer he enioyned me, I tooke it in good part, and I consecrated my selfe wholly and frankly to his will. So that there was a good agreement, & great quietnesse betweene vs.

No man durst be so bold as to interrupt our silence, when hee had commanded so through my mouth.

The fourth booke

L. I charge you, O daughters of Ierusalem & by the Roes, and by the Hindes of the fildes, that yee stir not vp, nor waken my Loue, vntill shee please.

7. Sal. S. 2.

S. Now therefore note, if you bee able to conceiue my words, what great cause I haue to lament the absence of my friend, by whose presence I began to bee so rich with all good things.

M. Heereunto I answered, I know well what you say: by often experience I haue proued so much, as you speak.

But, let vs comfort our selues in this, that the dispensation of his will is the increase of our zeale, and deuotion.

And now I haue receiued with thankfulness that which you haue uttered: notwithstanding, I would more throughly haue them beaten into mine head. For they which be hard of conceiuing, are often to be told of a matter.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 15.

1. Touching the fruit of friendship.
2. The benefits of Christ upon man.
3. The true felicitie and ioy of the soule.
4. The affinitie betweene Christ and the soule of man.



Raised bee God
which hath not put
back my prayer fro
me.

Therefore I am a Psa. 66. 10
now again zealous-
ly to enquire, if your friend at any
time left you without inward com-
fort.

What meane you? What muse you
heere about? How also may hee be
reconciled and reclaimed?

Of all friendship, I beseech you, O
deare and beloued soule to Christ,
conceale none of these things which
I am to demand of you.

You may so doe me a pleasure, in o-
pening to me your godly cogitations.

By your talke, I shall bee able to
measure the waight of my grieffe,
whether iustly or without cause I was
pensive.

For

The fourth Booke

For I haue seene you sometime merrie, and sometime said, and by and by glad againe, and by you I did somewhat consider of my selfe.

But I suppose the chiefest cause of this your alteration is, that returning & departure of the beloued. The which hath made mee, perceiving how you haue run ouer many matters, for mine instruction to resort vnto you.

S. According to your desire, I will bend my selfe somewhat to vnfolde the things which I feele within mee, both when I am with my friend, and also when I am alone, looking for him whom I so do loue.

This first vnderstand, I reape not so much ioy & pleasure by his presence, but I finde as much sorrow and bitterness through his absence.

But why it pleaseth him so to come and go, rather I had he should declare than I.

But you shall heare it when I haue finished the wordes of my song, because in the ende wee will bring him in vnto vs: and sitting among vs, he shall teach vs his order, the which he vseth to shew vnto such as desire his presence.

of the Imitation of Christ.

In the meane while giue attentiuē
care vnto mee, and bee not offended
at mine homely speech.

For wee are now come together to
stirre vp our hearts, & either to weepe
together, or through loue to reioyce
together.

For woe vnto him that is alone ^b, be- ^b Ec. 4. 10
cause when hee falleth into some sor-
row, or tentation, there is not a second
to lift him vp. And if two be together,
they wil comfort one the other; while
one being sad, the other minstreth
ioy: or if hee refuse to be comforted,
he shall bee pitied forthwith, & grieve
will be taken for his grieve: and so it
will fall out that either they will both
be glad, or both sad together. And al-
though some sorrow do yet still con-
tinue for some aduersity, or matter of
sorrow: yet the more patiently they
beare it, because their hearts bee so
linked, that nothing can change or al-
ter their minds.

Now, who seeing this faithful con-
cord of minds, but must needs breake
into thesewordes, and say ^c, Behold ^c Psal. 133. 2
*how good and how comely a thing it is,
bretbren to dwellen together.*

And therefore I can the more
boldly

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boldly tell you what I think, because
dread no deceipt, or subtiltie in you.

Lo, this all sweet spouse, and best
beloued friend, our Lord Iesus Christ
a Wis. 11. 23 the louer of holy soules^d, euen of
pure loue, notable otherwise to doe,
allured me vnto him; and when I was
c Aa. 17. 22 not, hee gaue mee life^e, wisdom
and power to beholde this common
light.

Hee gaue me grace to bee borne
anew by Baptisme, and adorned
me with to roabe of his precious
merits.

Ouer and besides, when afterward
I had foully bespotted my selfe with
sinne, and was far vnfit to loue him,
he cast not his eye on my filthinesse,
but vpon the side of his mercies.

For when as yet I wandered out of
theway, he reclaimed me of his good-
f Ro. 8. 30. nes^f, not suffering mee to perish in
this wicked world.

Moreouer, he hath prouided mee
a place to rest in so long as I liue in
this mortall bodie.

Notwithstanding, this dwelling
vnder the shadow of the beloued, is
nor the true rest, nor the rest which
shall for euer continue: but that is

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the true rest, which we shall feele after
the labors of this present life &

g. Reu. 21. 4.

Yet for the soule to perceiue her selfe
to bee vnburdened of worldly cares,
and there to rest where shee may the
more fully serue her beloued, & at-
tend vpon him in the secret chamber
of silence, it is a kind of comfort.

Furthermore, my friend hath not
left, but assisted mee in my diuers
troubles, and sore tentations.

Also hee hath both instructed mee
oftentimes with profitable sermons,
and confirmed me in his word.

And as young plants are wont to
be watered with shoures: so he hath
watered mee with inward comfort,
that the vertue newly implanted
within me may not wither.

L. And he said to me, if thou hast a
lust vnto mee, and wilt hearken vnto
mee, thou shalt enioy good things; if
thou wilt doe whatsoeuer I command
thee, thou art a friend of mine.

h. Iohn. 15.

If thou wilt choose mee, and loue
me above all things, all things that
you aske, my father will giue you:
but if you forgoe me, then shalt thou
come to destruction, for my wrath
shall bee incensed against thee; if

14.

thou.

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thou seekest after another, he shal not please thee long, but thou wilt loathe and abhor him. Because I am the saluation, and the life of the soule i.

i Ioh. 14. 6

Ioh. 11. 25.

S. So I turned me vnto him which had done me good, & expelling from out my selfe the dust of earthly affections, I decreed in mine heart from thenceforth to serue him onely : because I found nothing better than him, nor could imagine any couenant more profitable.

Let others yet, & seeke what friendship they wil elsewhere, I am thoroughly perswaded this is the true man of the soule, for whose sake mee think I could gladly forsake this world, to enioy his loue euerlastingly.

And therefore I stucke vnto him, for he liked me still : neither could I finde a better friend.

For my soule alway hath exceedingly desired such a one, as is the greatest for power, the best for goodnes, the worthiest for dignitie, and the most happy for all good things.

And because he is verie courteous, hee gaue mee comfortable words, warily foreseeing that they should neither terrifie, nor breake mee through

of the Imitation of Christ.

through ouer-much roughnesse, but rather enioyne and teach mee that which should bee both light, & sweete to be borne, that so my yong affection might the better be drawne on, and the more forceably addicted to the friend beloued, & not shrinke backe.

M. She shall the better, said he, bee instructed, and profit, if not by force, but through gentlenesse she be provoked forward. She will the more easily receiue my yoake rather by loue with rewards, than by feare with punishment. And if she neede impulsion, let it wisely bee vsed, that violence do not ouerthrowe her.

For he knew right well what was best for a young plant, and what profit this his kindnes would bring vnto mee, especially at the time of tryall, when I should easily call into my remembrance the good things which at the first he did vnto my soule, and thereby take courage to proccede in the battell.

Hec would not straightway open vnto me, what & how much trouble I was to endure in his seruice: but sometime hee tempered aduersities with prosperitie, wel considering my weake-

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weaknes at the first, vntill through experience I had gotten strength to endure affliction.

After all this he carried me about instructed, and bore mee vpon his shoulders.

He conducted mee ouer the holy Scripture, & with the heate of his holy Spirit hee armed mee against the wicked tentations of Sathan.

Moreouer, hee placed before mine eyes examples of all the vertues, namely, the holy Patriarches, & Prophets, besides the glorious lights of the new Testament.

Euen as a Mother teacheth her little childe, so he instructed me, breaking spirituall shells, and putting the kernels into my iawes, because they were sweet to be eaten.

Search if you can what they signifie, and where such may be found.

Open the Apostolicall book, read aduisedly, and see if you are able to comprehend so great mysteries.

Peruse the Prophet Isayah; looke into the Gospel, the light of all lights, & marke if they doe not yeelde most pleasant noyes of themselves.

In them whatsoeuer you finde, which

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which is obscure, and hard to be vnderstood, that is a nut in a shell.

But if you heare it expounded, and vnderstand that which afore you did not, then broken is the shell, and the sweetnes of the nut doth sauer in the heart. And so are wee to iudge of other darke sentences. Whereby you may behold so many nuts, as you see hidden sentences.

And how, thinke you, did he beare me on his shoulders? That hee did, so often as he beheld mine infirmities, and yet neither cast me off, nor despised me, but patiently and mercifully did beare with me ^k.

k 2.Pet.3.9

Againe, hee did beare mee on his shoulders, when he made other men to beare with mine infirmities, & whatsoeuer was blame-worthy within mee.

Besides, yet more louingly he did beare me on his shoulders, when he bare his crosse vnto the place, called the place of dead mens sculls ^l, where I Ioh. 19.17
hee was crucified. For then was I a ¹⁸.
more heauie burthen vnto him, than the crosse was? And my finnes were more grieuous to his bones ^m, than m 1.Pet.3.
this wood of the crosse to his backe. 24.
Because for my sake that crosse was carried,

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▪ *Esa. 55.5* carriedⁿ, not for his owne sake.

6.

Oh, how is he aboue all things
bee loued, and to be worshiped, by
whose grace and merits I am thus

• *Luk. 15.4* both found out^o, and redeemed.

5. &c.

p *Gal. 3. 13*

And therefore he shall be as deare to
me, as the child is to his mother.

But well I know, that I am far vn-
meet to loue him: Norwithstanding
my boldnes cometh from his good-
nes. Neither could I doe otherwise
but run vnto his most friendly em-
bracements, when he shewed himself
so kinde vnto me.

I do wel remember what the Pro-
phet Dauid in a certaine place doth
say *What am I? and what is my life, or
the family of my father in Israel, that I
should be sonne in lawe to the King?*

9 *1. Sam. 18*
18.

But our affinitie together is much
more excellent, than this of Dauid
and Saul. Because ours is a pure and
sincere kindred, not with flesh and
blood, but betweene God himselfe,
betweene faith vnuolated, and a
good conscience.

Of this did that Disciple whom
Iesus loued, speake on this wise:

11. *1. Ioh. 4.4* Greater is hee that is in you, than hee
that is in the world.

For

of the Imitation of Christ.

For God is loue^s, and loue bringeth forth this kinred. 1 Ioh. 4. 16

Therefore sith Dauid thought himselfe farre vnmeet to be sonne in law vnto an earthly King. much more abashed ought I to be, to enter into alliance with the King of all kings, that vouchsafeth to allure me, vile wretch, into his friendship.

So that he hath dealt with me, not according to my deserts, but euen as it seemed good in his mercifull eyes.

Oh blessed, and happy art thou, soule, now thou art fast bound with the chaine of the heavenly loue.

Oh how noble, and free art thou, seeing thou art priuie euen to the sighings of so holy copulation.

But seeing I haue spent many words about the beloued, and yet haue not answered fully vnto your demaund,

let vs now begin afresh, and God grant that our speech may be both to our comfort and profit.

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Chap. 16.

1. The more wee loue Christ, the more
we may. 2. Tentation and when
3. Happinesse of the life to
come. 4. How to beare
affliction.

a Psa. 123.2



Behold, as the eyes of ser-
uants looke vnto the
hands of their masters,
as the eyes of a maid
vnto the hand of her
mistress: so mine eyes are fixed contin-
ually vpon my friend.

b Ioh. 15.5

Since first I began to loue him, I haue
had a great desire to continue with
him. And this mine intent liked him
wel, & hee allowed the same, saying
He that abideth in me, and I in him,
the same bringeth forth much fruit.

But that the truth, the strength, and
the purity of my loue might appeare,
it was behoouefull that I should be
tempted. And so I could not be, vn-
lesse he both suffered the same, and
hid himselfe.

And, because tentation scructh
both for the purging of the inner
man, and for the fruitfull bringing
forth

c Psa. 119.

of the Imitation of Christ.

with of verue; & also for the better
perceiuing the spiritual graces of god,
was tried, & excercised therewithall

How strongly and how often hee
hang me this way and that way, my
God and Lord, which knoweth all
secrets^d, and is a witnesse to euerie
prinie cogitation of the heart^e, and
still seeth mee, and perceiueth how I
am nothing elie but a fraile creature^f,
when he knoweth right well.

d Ecclu. 23

19.
e A&. 15. 8

f Psal. 102. 11

If therefore he had not assisted me,
when I was extreemly afflicted,
doubtlesse I had perished^g, being
readie to fall into the pit of desperati-
on. But he whose manner is to com-
fort the troubled in spirit^h, tooke
mercy vpon me.

g Psal. 119.
92.

h Psal. 34. 18

For if God helped & assisted not,
who were able to beare so manifold
tentations.

And therefore it was of his great
mercie that I stode before the face
of such troublesome tempests: and
also it is of the same his goodnesse,
that still I doe stand and fall not.

But heereof I may not vaine-
lie boast, so long as I liue in this mortall
bodie.

For though I see the element is
now

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now cleere, yet doe I not thinke
long it will continue quiet. For
winde to daynly will arise, & that
pely when we thinke least there

So that by so much I perceiue
neede my friend his assistance,
how much I perceiue I doe lie open
on all sides to troubles.

We shall be quiet no where but
in **1 Reu. 21.4.** heaven¹, where my friend doth see
his elect with ioy and exultation.

But when there? What can I speake
thereof? Scarce can I think any thing
therof, & that not evidently enough,
and enter thereinto I may not.

Oh that hee would come, and
mee in that all glorious, quiet, and
fruitfull pasture of his Saints, where
neither Sathan is, nor danger to be
feared.

As yet I roile in the sea, and whe-
ther I shall attaine vnto the port of
saluation by reason of my troubles
arising through so many contrary
windes, I am vterly ignorant.

So that I am altogether out of
quiet. Notwithstanding, it is a shield
and comfort vnto mee, that I still
behold the light of faith, that with

of the Imitation of Christ.

all submission I seeke the fauour of
my beloued, that I beare toward him
a constant hope, that I will not bee
separated from his loue ^k, and that ^{k Ro.8.35.}
I doe rest vpon his prouidence, and
unsearchable goodnesse, more than
vpon my selfe.

And therefore, though too too of-
ten I doe stagger, yea, and fall too
sometime into sinne, yet I am not to
despaire, but rather continually to
eye vnto him and to cry,

O Lord my GOD, haue mercie
vpon me, and suffer me not to perish
through my manifold temptations, but
assist me faithfully, that valiantly I
may resist and overcome.

Reach out thy right hand vnto
the worke of thine owne hands ¹, oh ^{1 Iob 14.15.}
thou which triest mee by Satan, and ^{Psal.95.7.}
seest mee oftentimes on thy left
hand.

And if any such temptation shall
come, as will stay mee from crying
vnto the Lord, then will I sigh from
the bottome of mine heart. For he
knoweth euen the verie secrets of
the heart ^m, and is priuie to the gro- ^{m Psal.7.9.}
nings of the spirit ⁿ. It is not his will ^{n Rom.8.}
that any one euen of the least should ^{26.27.}

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o Mat. 18. perish. Oh, how great was his goodnesse to me-ward, in that it pleased him to bee present with mee in my trouble, when I did not know, nor could marke so much! For often hee preserved mee from being vtterly giuen ouer vnto my wicked affections.

Through his secret iudgement it came to passe now & then, that I felt, and was foiled euen in trifles, that I might not waxe proud, and be high minded for great things, but learne through humiliation, how I was nothing euen then when I seemed to stand vpright, and to flourish.

And therefore I with you not offer rashly, or quickly to commend mee, though I seeme to prosper in your sight, but reserve all praise vntill the good day of my death, yet rather praise the Lord, and not me.

Giue the glorie vnto G O D our high, which assisted mee in all my tentations.

For hee deliuered mee of his mercie manie a time, when I was taken of mine enemies.

Also when they came as a whirlwinde to destroy mee, hee sent out his arrowes, and scattered them.

Psa. 18. 14.

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and he encreased lightnings and appalled them, so that they left me for a time. Because hee would not haue mee to bee without that, which from time to time hee hath acquainted his Saints withall. So that I had afterward a little quietnesse, and peace, by the meanes of my friend.

Acts 14.
22.
Psal. 34. 19.

Whereupon, I did betake mee not vnto bodily, or worldly, but vnto spirituall ease, beholding the earth a far off, & casting my thoughts vpon the secrets of heauen.

Col. 3. 1. 2.

I gaue diligence to see what manner of person I am, and how I might best please him, which had reuealed vnto mee so many tokens of loue, far beyond all deserts of mine.

And so much as in mee lay, I wished continually for this ioyfull peace, the better to cleaue vnto him, and to serue him the more freely.

But many times the soule hath not her desire: but sometime it is granted, sometime vpon good consideration it is deferred.

For who would not wish still to rest vnder the shade of the beloued, if it might bee granted him, and if time and place were conuenient.

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But now my friend worketh with me againe.

I feele not affliction alway, neyther yet doe I enioy continuall rest, but by an euenning & morning a day is made.

For this mortall life is spent in comming and going both through
 x Acts 14. prosperity and aduersity.
 22.

y Iob 7. 18. This was in the mind of that Saint, which said :

Thou dost visite him in the morning, and triest him every moment.

Notwithstanding, it seemeth a kinde of rest, if the enemy doe neyther too oft, nor too importunately assaile.

And therefore when it shall be granted mee euen a little to rest my selfe sweetely in my beloued, I will take it in good part, and reioyce. I will reioyce, I say, yea and alway reioyce for that grace of God.

Moreouer, it maketh me bold to pray vnto him in all my necessities, because he hath freely preuented me so oftentimes with his mercifull visitation.

For when hee doth but approach, minding to keepe holy day with mee, euen then sodainly there shal

neeth

meth a light ouer mine heart, which
forthwith driueth out the clouds of
all wicked cogitations, whereby I do
enioy the long desired cleernesse of
God his light.

Because no vnclen, nor filthy thing
can stand where hee entreth in^a, for² ^{Reu. 21.}
hee loueth puritie^a, & is the ingrafter^{27.}
of the same, so that of necessitie all sa-^a ^{Mat. 5.}
tanical illusion, together with the
pompes of this world, must bee pack-
ing.

Therefore my passions & tentations
which I did endure, being suppres-
sed, I began both the more euidently
to know, and the more earnestly to
loue, and the more heartily to praise
him, for vouchsafing at the length to
beat back the damned crew of the
wicked from assailing me.

For they doe disturb my peace, and
sin doth so shut vp my mouth, that I
am ashamed to speake vnto my wel-
beloued.

But in vaine doe they bend them-
selues against his power and wise-
dome, because euen in a moment he
can slide downe into mine heart, and
poure in secretly good motions, that
I may both contemne, and viterly

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neglect all their priuie whisperings.

O my faithfull, & all happie friend
take me so vnto thee, whensoever
thou shalt perceine mine affections
to be either pressed down at any time
with the weight of sin, or to bee held
with vnnecessary busines, that I may
not wander far astray from thee after
the swarme of wicked cogitations, &
so ouerhastily bee deprived of thy
grace, without which I shall not bee
able to enioy thy friendship.

For thou art my Lord, and my
Mat. 4. 10 God^b, which by thy word dost both
heale and sanctifie; which holdeth
Psa. 66. 9. my soule in life^c, and sufferest not
my feete to slip, but deliuerest mee
from the euill day, and from the
snares of death.

Oh, how many haue bin cast off,
and vtterly perished, that haue bin
much more innocent than I am!

And therefore my soule, praise
thou the Lord, and all that is within
mee blesse his holy Name^d.

Psa. 103. My soule, I say, praise thou the
P. 2. Lord, and forget not all his benefita.

It is all too little, and far vn suffici-
ent whatsoeuer thou shalt either
thinke, or speake, or promise to his
praise.

of the Imitation of Christ.

praise. For he exceedeth all praise, & is much sweeter than anie musicke.

Wherefore my soule cleaueth to thee alone, and loueth thee aboue all other gifts, notwithstanding it be exceedingly beautifull and sweete; which of mere good will thou hast sent vnto me.

For thou alone art the Spouse: as e Mat. 9. 15. for all things else they are gifts, and arguments of loue.

In stead of thee I will not loue them; neither will I beleue that anie thing, or all things in the world can suffice mee, if I haue not thee: for in so doing, I may perchance forgoe thee with them too.

Thou giuest me leaue to vse many things for thy sake; but I may not enioy so much as one thing in thy stead. Exo. 20. 3.

And therefore, O Christ my sweet Spouse, I haue preferred thee afore all other things, and my care hath been aboue all things to loue thee.

Wherefore grant that blessedly I may enioy thee, and in that vnion euerlastingly to triumph in happines together with thee.

But how farre am I come? I haue
G 4 leng-

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lengthened my speech more than perhaps you would. But pardon me, good friend. For I haue been carried aloft through the loue of my especiall, & only friend; and would to God it would please him stil to lift vp both me and you too, in contemplation.

Let him prouide an heavenly ascension, but let vs not keepe a base going downe:

M. Aske you me, whether I am forsaken at any time of my beloued?

S. Yea, I say so.

M. But how doe you behaue your selfe in trouble?

S. I take all things as patiently as I can, expecting his comming.

Naturally I am grieved: but as touching my spirit, I haue inward patience; that my griefe proue not incurable. For I forget not, how he thus loneth hueth in paine.

8 Ro. 1. 17. I liue by Faith; I beleue the holy Scriptures; I giue credit to the words of comfort. And although I endure affliction, yet I doubt not, neither in doubt haue I to doubt, but that God (when it pleaseth him) can send me ease.

For true, and to be credited are those

those wordes which are declared.
Because the very Saints themselves
haue beene exercised in many, and
proued in like things^{h.}

Nature continually doth with for
quietnes, & seeketh to be comforted
in some thing: but the spirit notwithstanding
is readie to sustaine whatso-
ever the wil of God is I should endure^{i.} h. Heb. 12:
4.5.6. Mar. 14.

If therefore I shall be lesse zealous,
and lesse willing to do good, my pu-
nishment shall be the more grieuous.
*Though he slay me, saith the wise man,
yet will I trust in him.* 38. k Job 13.

If I loue vertues, patience is a great
vertue: therefore let patience euer-
more bee retained. For the more
praise we purchase, the more paines
we take in bringing things to passe.

And that our vertue may bee pro-
ued, and made the more glorious, we
are commonly exercised by contrarie
euent.

Therefore whensoever any such
triall shal happen, be not out of heart,
neither fall downe; but retaine thou
patience, and extoll the righteousness
of God. The Lord is not so hard and
pitiless, that he can suffer you to a-
bide long vncomforted.

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Onely haue a care, that you neither lament immoderately, nor yet murmure against the righteous and iust God, because you are forsaken, lest the wicked spirit doe send vnto you more grienous tentations of your faith, whereby being ouer fearefull, you shall extreamely be afflicted.

1a. Cor. 10.
10.

Wherefore beare a little, and suppress your sorrow, although the griefe both of your heart and bodie be neuer so great.

Abide constant in that good purpose, which at the first you intended to keepe. For it is good, especially at such an extremitie, to cast all confidence vpon the beloued.

Looke thou patiently for God his heauenly comfort, so shall you speedily perceiue a speciall fauour and sight of God.

Lo, you haue a faithfull witnesse, saying ^m, *I waited patiently for the Lord, and hee inclined vnto mee, and heard my crie.*

Psalm 40. 1

And that in your neede you may finde the like fauour, I doe wish you both earnestly to pray your selfe, and desire others to pray for you also, and to commit your self wholly to

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to his will and ordinance, that hee may deale with you euen as it shall please him; and say to him with a good conscience: In thine hands are my workes, thou knowest how it goeth with mee; thou knowest what I suffer: and now if it bee thy will, I shall speedily be comforted.

Notwithstanding, let that be done w^{ch} seemeth right, and good in thine eyes, and haue mercy on me, a desolate, and miserable wretch, pitiously complaining vnto thee.

If therefore thou continue in patience and long-suffering, and for a little trouble, swerue not from the faith and loue in Iesus Christ, assure your selfe the brightness of God his fauour will returne, and illuminate thee most gloriously with his beams of spirituall comfort. And so the beloued at his returne shall bee more deare vnto thee, than if he had neuer been absent.

For the sentence of God his displeasure is not past calling back; neither is he so offended, that hee may not be reconciled againe.

Doubtlesse hee will speedily, and easily bee at one with thee, if thou
giue

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giue diligence, & promise afterward both to be more carefull that you sin not, & earnest to lead a vertuous life.

If thou wilt yeeld to these wholesome admonitions, doubt you not, thy beloved will be with you as afore, and at his presence you will receive much comfort, saying,

a. Ps. 31. 29.

How great is thy goodnes, which thou hast laid up for them that feare thee! which thou hast don for them which trust in thee! vnder the shadow of thy wings thou wilt protect them.

O Zion, thou shalt be reuied, & see thy King which is to reigne in thee.

a. Dan. 2. 37.

Thy beloved is the King of power, whose hinder parts are in the paleness of gold, but his head is pure gold.

Thus much may suffice to be said for your comfort.

As for other things concerning the change of the beloved, namely, how hee appeareth sometime, and sometime runneth to and fro, in the next discourse you shall receive, and heare them euen from his owne mouth.

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CHAP. 17.

1. The maiesty, and omnipotencie of
God. 1. How, and why the Lord affli-
cteth his children.



Marvelous are thy workes,
and my soule knoweth
it right well a.

a Psal. 139

How is it O my be- 14.
loued, that I am thus
dealt withal? Why hast
thou forsaken me? Answer, I beseech
thee.

Thou didst leaue me, & wentest, &
camest againe. And hercin thou did-
dest well. For hadst thou not made a
speedy returne, I had fainted wel-nie:
but thou tookest compassion vpon
me, being priuy to all my secrets.

For through your departure I was
very sad: and now for your returne I
am glad againe.

Notwithstanding, for my learning
sake, tell, what good meaning had
you therein? What auaieth it you so
to leaue, and afflict me?

Take you pleasure in hearing? Tur- b Luke 24.
ry with vs, for it is towards night b. 29.

O come, and sit among vs; for lo, I
and.

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& another disciple are verie desirous to heare you speake, and we heartily pray you to instruct vs.

Speake boldly what it shall please you, & if you think good, turne your speech vnto mee. I doe heare none with such pleasure as I doe you. And whosoever else doth speak, his speech is gratefull, and well listened vnto of mee, for your sake that speake within him. And therefore your speech shall bee to mee more sweete, than either the honie, or the honie-combe: For they passe in sweetnesse all other words,

Let now your voice sound in mine eares.

So then the voice of the beloued thundered and said:

c Efa. 45.
19. *L.* I am the Lord which speak righteousnesse *c*; And who is like mee in counsaile and wisdome?

d Efa. 45.
7. 8. Who made the sea, and the drie land? I, the Lord, forming the light, and creating the darknesse *d*.

e Psal. 7. 9. Who hath entred into the sea, and brought forth waters out of the deepe? Euen I, the Lord, which search the hearts and the reines *e*.

Who hath knowne all things past, and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and is priuie to the things to come?
Euen I; the Lord, which haue done
all things in measure, number, and
weight ^f.

f Wis. 12. 17

I am the Creatour both of heauen
and earth ^g, the ruler of this world ^h,
the knower of hidden things ⁱ, the
reuealer of secrets ^k, the possessor of
the whole world ^l, and the beholder
of the causes of all particulars.

g Esa. 42. 5

h 2. Ti. 1. 17

i Reu. 3. 15.

k Eccl. 42. 20

l Mat. 10. 26

1 Psa. 50. 12.

I am God, and change not ^m, who
haue continually with me the causes
of all changes in the world.

m Mal. 3. 6.

I am God the Almighty ⁿ whose
power is inuincible ^o; I am God the
most High ^p, whose highnesse can-
not bee attained ^q; I am God, the
most Righteous ^r, whose being can-
not be conceiued ^s.

n Gen. 35. 12

o Reu. 4. 8.

p Ru. 11. 17.

q Rom. 9. 19

r Esa. 14. 14

s Psa. 139.

7. 8. & c.

I am for my presence euery where ^t,
and yet no where to be seen ^u.

t Mat. 19. 17

u Job 11. 7. 8

& c.

I am the most spirituall, and far-
thest from the senses of man ^v.

v Psa. 139.

7. 8. 9.

I beare all things, yet neuer bur-
dened ^w, and I fil and rule each place,
and yet vnstretched ^x.

w Job 23. 8.

x Job 9.

y Ioh. 1. 18.

z Heb. 1. 3.

I behold both things past, & things
to come alike, as though they were
present ^z.

z Wis. 8. 8.

I surpasse all creatures both spiri-
tuall

Eccl. 42. 10

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a Pl. 35. 10. rual, and coporall^a.

I am diuersly to be named: yet no thought is able to conceiue mee as I am.

I shewe my selfe suddenly, and forth-with when one would little thinke, I am gone againe.

b. 1. Tim. 6. 16. I am indeed the inuisible God, which after a thousand waies declare my presence to my friends.

And thus I spake vnto the louing soule,

I wil hide my face for a little season, I will forsake her for a while, to see if her loue bee pure, and vnfaigned.

It is a great matter to loue vnfaignedly. For that is to loue mee neither for her owne sake, nor for any temporall commoditie, or spirituall comfort; but to loue mee, and mee only; and that for mine owne sake, and that to the end, & that in hope of nothing at mine hands.

It is not in euery one thus to loue mee; but this prerogative of pure louing, is proper onely to the perfect soule.

But she that is yet vnperfect, hath great need often to be proued, and exercised, that shee may knowe both how

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how much she loueth mee, and how greatly she despiseth her selfe.

For you said in your heart, Truly I doe loue (Christ) yea, and often you repeate the same thing, I loue him indeed.

But I credit not words, or thoughts onely. For I will make due tryall of that loue.

When I am present, and speake faire; when I either put, or encrease good motions in the minde; when I grant prosperity most commonly or pleasure, then can you say with all deuoutnes, *O my beloued, I do loue you.* And you say well. For I am greatly to be loued, & you are at no time either to think, or speake otherwise than friendly, and honourably of me.

But for prosperity, & good turnes only to loue & to commend me, what great thing is it? Because euen sinners doe the same. For when they haue receiued what naughtily they craved, they oftentimes blesse mee for the same. But praise is not seemly in the mouth of the sinner.

d. Beatus.

He therefore which either for some profit, or comfort receiued, doth loue mee, doth no more than a couetous

The fourth booke

uetous man doth. But exceede him, I say, exceed him, and proceede vnto greater righteousness.

Be ashamed still to bee weake and tender; learne to eate mans meate, bee not still fed with the milke of children.

Attaine thou to the companie of the stout Dauids, that can hold both speare, and sword, and shield.

• Luk. 9. 23. Take vp the crosse, & follow me.

Make haste to bee in the number of them which haue learned to beare diuers afflictions, and much banishment for my name sake. You are too much giuen vnto ease.

I purpose to trye you, and to turne vnto the other side, that you may know what you can suffer, least you seeme ouer-innocent and holy in your owne conceit.

Tribulation, and anger, and mine heauie displeasure, together with sore tentations of wicked spirits, shall come vpon you. Some vniustly shall spoyle you of your goods; others shall take no compassion vpon you; others shall defame; others shall resist; others shall overcharge; others shall carrie you perforce whither

of the Imitation of Christ

ther you would not goe; some outwardly, others inwardly, shall trouble you. Some shall be aduanced vnto high degree, and honour, but you shall be left vnto reproaches, and endure seruile paines. In all these, yea and in greater things, you shall be proued, whether you are a valiant souldier of mine, or no.

I will depart and not gine ouer, vntill I haue made sufficient tryall, whether you blesse mee to my face.

Now if I find, that from the heart vnfaignedly you doe loue mee, and continually do praise my Name, then is it meete that from thenceforth I call you Spouse, and that you shall haue a secret chamber with me.

But if I perceiue that you cannot beare my correction, but will iudge my punishment to be ouer-sharp, and still bewaile mine absence, wishing for mee with heartie and earnest desire, I will send you my staffe, that you may arise thereby, and afterward my selfe will come, and restore you againe vnto my wonted fauour. For it is not my will that you should utterly faint; because him that loueth me, I will loue to the end.

f Ioh. 13. 1.

And

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And although your loue be not so perfect as could be wished ; yet I will not despise you, but prouide that you may grow on in louing. For my care is that you doe well ; and therefore mistrust me not.

I know what you can endure: which maketh me to temper my course, that you bee not tempted aboue your strength, and so faint.

And if I stay, in your opinion, somewhat too long, looke for me vntill the day of my visitation. For comming, I will come, & performe my promise.

Be you still in prayer, still meditating vpon the holy Scripture, and alway be patient, and suffer.

I am not ignorant but your grief will bee much: but so quickly to be overthrowne, & to bee out of all hope of my returne, I cannot like that.

Where is your faith ? A great faith you had neede of, especially on this behalfe : for although you see not mee, yet are you seene of mee, into whose hands you are to commend both your selfe, and all that you haue.

For although you are not priuie to my iudgements: yet hauing a strong faith,

of the Imitation of Christ.

faith, you must of necessity say^h, Righteous art thou, O Lord, and iust are thy^{137.}
iudgements.

So then be of good comfort, for this affliction is not to your destruction, but for the glory of God.

I denyed your petition, because I would haue due prooffe of your faith and loue.

For, all this I did that you should wel vnderstand both your own weakness, and my goodnes^{1.}

I know what you are^k, better than your selfe doth. Yea, I haue knowne you thoroughly, not of late, but from euerlasting^{1.}

i Psal. 119.

67.71.

k Psal. 7.9.

1 Wi. 3.8.

Wherefore acknowledge the benefit which you haue by mee; behold how miserable you should be, if once I forsake you.

As yee you haue not profitted sufficiently in the knowledge of your selfe. And because it is very expedient that you haue that knowledge, my wil was that by experience you should attaine thereunto.

It is very good for you to be forsaken, to be troubled, to be humbled sometime, that so the better you may euen sensibly perceiue your owne

The fourth booke

m Psa. 119. owne weakenesse m.

71.

I know right well this will make you a good disciple of mine. And what, I pray you, haue you lost, if heereby you proue more wise and watchfull?

Oftentimes you are too arrogant, and forgetfull of your selfe, thinking that goodnesse to bee within you which is not; selfe-loue doth deceiue you, and while you thinke not of the giuer, you doe abuse the gift. I made you drunke; but you forgot how the grape did grow vpon mine owne vine.

Trie your selfe a little, acknowledge your strength. If that which you had came of your selfe, why did you not hold it? But if you could not hold it, confesse that you receiued it from above.

n 1. Cor. 4. honour to the mercy of God, and openly confesse, how without me you can doe nothing.

7.

lam. 1. 7.

o Ioh. 15. 5

Consider both in what stead I stand you, and how able also I am to confirme you in all goodnesse.

Where were you before I called you, but weltering in sin and wickedness? And now how would you wander, if I directed you not? Yea and when

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when also went it well with you, if you had not my fauour?

S. And I said, At no time, sweete Lord. Thou alone art my singular good friend, in all things, and aboue all most faithfull.

L. Why then did you purpose so wickedly with your selfe, to goe after strange louers?

What misliked you in mee; was it either my maiestie, or my beautie?

S. Ah Lord, there is none comparable to thee either for beautie, or for glorie, or for riches, or for authority; neither in heauen nor in earth is anie like vnto thee. For thou onely art most hie ouer all creatures.

The heauens are thine, the earth also is thine; thou hast laid the foundation of the world, and all that therein is.

Much is it that thou hast imparted vpon thy creatures, by which, thy beautie, wisdom, and goodnes doth appeare: but yet in comparison of thy blessed and glorious presence, it is nothing. So that by experience I haue learned now, that I cannot lack thy companie one houre together, but with much grieue to my soule.

Returne

p 1. Kin. 8.

23.

9 Psal. 89.

11.

p Ro. 1. 20.

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L. Returne therefore vnto me; thou hast hitherto wandered enough about.

Let not henceforth to be more flayed, and milde, and faithfull, yea, to trust in me, not onely in the day of my gracious visitation, but much more in the night of retriuation.

I haue let you slip, that being wearied, you might returne vnto me the more speedily, and being frustrate of outward comfort, at length vnderstand how much you are bound vnto me, that so often haue called vnto you.

A. And therefore listen now at the last, for it is not without cause that sometime you are forsaken; that you are cold sometime in zeale, that it irketh you, that you are ouerwearied with tentations, that on all sides you are afflicted, that you can neither finde any counsaile, nor feele comfort, but are enforced to endure angursh and miserie at all times, and in all places.

I am absent, to the end you may know how needefull it is that I be present with you, not onely in one matter, or in a speciall cause, but in euery

merie action in all places & times so well earlie as late, wherefocuer you shall become, goe, or stand. For this will teach you to walke warily with your friend, to abstain from vanities, and to take heed of offences *℥ Mich. 6. 8.*

I do leaue you, that you may well vnderstand how much you are bound to loue mee, that is, that you may see a manner how to loue mee indeed.

It is verie true, you thought your selfe more stout, and happie, than in truth you were: but when I did once withdraw mine aide from you a litle, & then appeared to the world how you were verie poore, and miserable *℥ Ren. 3. 17.*

How shall your loue bee knowne, lesse you beare my yoke with patience?

Sometime I see you to waxe sluggish, and therefore I doe hide my selfe for an houre, like a friend standing behinde the wall^a, that you *Song 2. 9.* may be stirred vp the more zealously to seeke me.

I know for my part, and see all things^x: but troublous trials (which *x Eccl. 4. 2.* are good for many causes) doe make *1. 2. 10.*

H you

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you the more heedie and wise in all
y^elsa. 38. 19 your actions.

Moreover, if you loue mee, you
will not waxe the more sluggish in
seeking mee for all this; if you like
me, you will seeke me.

What? Wot you not, how riches
painesfully come by, are kept most
carefully? who so wisheth rest, as the
wearied man? Who loveth so kindly
as he which hath sighed most heaui-
ly? And is not that iewell which was
lost, and is found againe, much more
esteemed than before it was? So,
euen so is the ioy double, and the
mirth doubled, at the long wished
presence of the beloued.

And therefore it is much for your
profit that I withdraw my selfe, be-
cause I doe it, not for anie ill will to
you wards, but vpon verie good
cause: so do I dally with my friends.

Let it suffice you at this time, that
you haue been in my fauour to hear
so much at my mouth.

Besides, when you haue neede re-
turne vnto me, and feare not. For I
neuer shut mine eares against the
person which humbly and earnestly
crieth for mine assistance.

of the Imitation of Christ.

CHAP. 18.

1. The confidence of a true christian.
2. God iustificieth the vngodly.
3. giueth whatsoeuer good is to man.
4. will haue no man to despaire.
5. but that all sinners should flie vnto his mercie.



Y Lord God will helpe
me, therefore shall I not
be confounded.

a Isai. 50. 7.

S. Let it grieue no
bodie, though I loue
much to speake with
my Lord God, whose goodnes hath
allured, & inflamed me both to pray
and to meditate in such sort, that me
thinks, I should be too hard and vn-
kind, if I made none answer vnto his
words.

But happely some one will say
against mee, Therefore neither do
you feare God, seeing you are a soule
sinner, vaworthie euen to liue in this
world.

When ce is it that you dare so pre-
sume in your heart? And, being the
least, and vilest of all others, with
H 2 what

The fourth booke

what face can you thrust forth your
a Eccl. ius. 15 self so to talk with your Lord God?

9. Whom doe you make your selfe?
loh. 9. 13.

Oh, my louing Lord, do thou
answer on my behalfe. For the
mouth of the wicked is opened vpon
b Ps. 109. 2. me b.

If I would iustifie my selfe, mine
aleb 9. 20. owne mouth shall condemne mee,
And though I were cleane, yet did
not my soule know so much.

Oh Lord, thou knowest my follie,
and my shamefastnesse. Speake thou
on my behalfe, and I full gladly will
keep silence.

L. Giue thou none heede to the
words of the wicked: but rather doe
thou remember how I haue said,
I came not to call the righteous but the
sinners to repentance d.

d Mar. 2. 17. Am not I to doe what I will?

e Mat. 28. 17 Who may resist my pleasure?

Mar. 17. 2. If I thinke it good to shew fauour

Heb. 2. 8. to thee-ward, though little thou de-
serue the same at mine hands, who
shall reprove me therefore f?

f Rom. 8.

33. 34. Hee that is without sinne, let him

g loh. 8. 7. throw the first stone at thee s. But

if they, all the pack of them, are sin-
ners, with what face can they finde
fault

Chap. 18. 149 Gods kindness, mans happines
of the Imitation of Christ.

fault with my fauour to thee-ward?

You haue not chosen mee^k, but h^loh. 1. 16
my mercie did preuent you.

Dareth anie yet murmure against
you for comming vnto me? Comfort
thy selfe, his murmure is not against
thee, but flatly against my person,
because it is I that receiue^d, and eate; 1. Ti 1. 15
with sinners^k. And why ought you k Mat. 9. 11.
not to challenge mine acquaintance, 12. 13.
the which I reioyce to offer, rather
than to withdraw from any one?

S. O gracious Lord, lay not this
sin to their charge, but to me, and to
my sins.

I cannot denie, but deservedly
they conceiue ill of mee; yet, I doe
openly acknowledge this withal, that
I am much more wicked than anie
man doth know.

L. You doe well thus to humble
your selfe. For in so doing, you shall
ouer gaine, and more easily obtaine
my fauour.

Notwithstanding, I will not ther-
fore cast you away, because you are
a sinner and faultie, albeit that should
make you both to thinke basely of
your selfe, and alway to haue in mind
what great sinnes you are polluted

The fourth booke

withall. But that you perish not through desperation, consider how manie righteous men I haue made of

I Mar. 2. 17. finners^s, friends of enemies, chosen
Luke 15. 1. sing the humble, and refusing the
2. &c. proud^m.

I Lu. 1. 51. I haue no neede of anie gift of
52. &c.

Luke 18. 14. thineⁿ: onely this I require at your
James 4. 6. hands, namely, that you loue mee
Psalm 50. with a pure heart^o, and I am satisfi-

ed.

5. I am cleane dashed: for alas, there
is nought within me to stirre vp your
loue thus to me-ward.

L. I do neither respect nor require the things that this world doth offer to get fauour withall; if you do loue, and that your loue bee feruent, and constant, it is all that I aske.

But, I pray thee, whose are the things that do, or may adorn a man? Are not all things mine, whatsoever doe glitter either in the bodie, or

p **I**am. 1. 17. minde??

1. **C**or. 4. 7. As for that of the world, and which set out the body, they ought little to trouble your minde. But the things which belong to the beautifying of vertue, it standeth you vpon to seeke, that you may please the Lord in the
light

Chap. 18. 191 Him that loveth, God fauoureth:
of the Imitation of Christ.

light of the liuing.

Howbeit, you haue well done in
humbling, and accusing your selfe so
well outwardly as inwardly before
the face of my maiesty, by confessing
vnsainedly your great weaknesse, and
wickednesse, and by fetching deep
sighes, for that you are verie vnwor-
thie to challenge the fauour of my
familiaritie euen but one houre, be-
ing as I am a glasse pure without
spot, & you are a great sinner, & vn-
cleane, euen from your infancie.

9 Wis. 7. 20
1 Gen. 8. 22

And therefore bee euer mindefull
both of your fraile condition, and of
my glorious Maiestie, and so with
humble reuerence approach boldly
into my presence. For I am hee that
purgeth away thine iniquities, and
will not remember thy sinnes; it is I
that iustifie the vngodly: and this I
do for mine holy Name sake; yea &
I am still readie to minister greater
gifts of mercie vnto thee.

11 Isai. 43. 25.
1 Rom. 4. 5.

Because I doe euer choose to shew
fauour rather than displeasure, as one
who had rather spare than punish.

Yea, all this seemeth but little in
mine eyes, nor am I so content with
the first grace that I will not adde

The fourth Booke

a second or a third rather, yea, in
verie deede, as I can set none end
to my mercies¹: so neither can the
number of my gifts and benefits be
recited².

Ps. 145. 9.

Ps. 68. 19. Last of all, after that I for my part
haue pardoned sinnes, and men for
their parts by their goodnesse haue
testified to the world their vnfeined
repentance, then doe I restore for
the most part the comfort of mine
healthfull countenance, by pouring
in most plentifull maner the grace of
mine holy spirit. And although a sin-
ner doe abide still in the flesh yet do
I receiue him into my familiaritie, so
that hee is not to feare the vtter con-
fusion for sinnes committed: but ra-
ther to thanke and praise God, that
old things be passed away, and that
all things are become new³.

y 2. Cor. 5.
17.

So gracious and mercifull am I,
that alwaies I am more readie to for-
giue, than thou art to beg forgiveness
at mine hands; more readie to giue
than thou art to aske.

Therefore why feare you? What
dismaieth you to approach vnto the
side of such fauors? And why do you
estrangle your selfe from so great
kindnesse

of the Imitation of Christ.

kindnesse offered vnto you so frankly
of mine owne accord?

Doubtlesse though you did cer-
tainly vnderstand that I were purpo-
sed to giue you the deniall: yet ought
you not to desist from praier, nor yet
to be out of all hope of being heard;
but so much the more earnestly to be
instant in crying, vntill you were
heard. For my mercies are infinite, &
what I denie at one time, may bee
granted fauourably at another.

How know you whether I will turn
my face vnto you, and grant you the
desire of your heart?

And what saith the Prophet con-
cerning me? Approch vnto him, and
be illightened, so shall not your faces
be confounded.

Wherefore accuse your slow com-
ming vnto mee, rather than your of-
ten approching; & rather your fear-
ful shamesfastnesse, than your promp-
t presuming of forgiuencesse.

To hope well of my goodness, is a
verie token of true humilitie, and of
a great faith.

This doe I speake, that you may
not offend; and that when you doe
offend, you despaire not, but rise

H; againe

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againe with speede. For yet you haue hope, and an Aduocate with the Fa-

a 1. Ioh. 2. 1. ther ².

What? Lookes you to bee all wor-
thie before you make accessie vnto
mee? And of your selfe when will
you be so?

If only such as are good and wor-
thie, and great, and perfect, should
approach vnto me, to whom should
sinners and publicans approach?

So then what saith the Gospell?
There resorted vnto him publicans and
a Luk. 15. 1. *sinners to heare him* ^a. Therefore let
the vnworthish approach, that they
may become worthish; let the wicked
approach, that they may bee made
good; let the weake and vnperfect
approach, that they may proue strong
and perfect: yea let all and euery
one approach, that they may receiue
from the abundant streames of the
b Ioh. 4. 14. well of life ^b. I am the well of life,
that cannot be drawne drie.

He which is a thirst, let him come
c Ioh. 7. 37. vnto me and drinke ^c. And he which
hath nothing, let him come and buy
d Isai. 55. 1. without siluer and without monie ^d.

He that is sicke let him come to be
e Mat. 9. 12. healed ^e. Hee that is neither hot nor
cold,

*of the Imitation of Christ*haue
e Fa.

cold let him come to be inflamed f. f Mar. 9. 24.

wor.
vnto
willHe that is fearefull, let him come
to be encouraged; he that is sorrow-
full, let him come to be comforted.ver.
ould
ouldHe that is withered, let him come
to bee fattened, he that is wearied with
cares, let him come to bee refreshed
with ioy. Lo, my delight is to be with
the children of men g.

g Ro. 8. 34.

ell?

Hee that desireth wisdom, let
him come vnto my lessons h.

h Psal. 119.

and

Hee that seeketh riches, let him
come to receiue those which are e-
ternall and incorruptible i.

i Mat. 6. 19.

let

hey

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20.

Hee that hunteth for honour, let
him come to get an euerlasting
name in the inheritance of heauen;
hee that wisheth for felicitie, let him
come, and hee shall taste the soue-
raigne, eternall, and infinite happi-
nesse k.

k 1. Cor. 2. 9

I, euen I it is which giueth all tem-
porall good things, yea and besides I James 1. 7
that, I giue eternall riches in the
heauens m. And what I promise I m Ro. 6. 23;
will performe, at such time as my
commandements are duly observed.
And he then shall bee crowned glo-
riously in heauen, that hath fought
couragiously in this world n.n 2. Tim. 4.
11. 12.

Chap.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 19.

1. The desire of a Christian Soule is
neuer satisfied, till God be enjoyed.

2. No comfort anie whit
comparable to the
spirituall
ioy.

Ps. 19. 14.



*Et the meditation of
mine heart bee accepta-
ble in thy sight.*

1. Cor. 13.

8.

What can bee more
comfortable, What
more ioyfull to the faithfull Soule,
than still deuoutly to meditate vpon
her Lord God, that whom shee can-
not as yet behold in a cleere, & ble-
sed sight, at the least she may, as it
were, make him present by earnest
calling him into mind? Therefore let
her behold him as in a glasse darkly,
whom she is not to see face vnto face.

And albeit she may not haue a full
sight of him in his maiestie: yet let
her search for him by types in the
Scriptures.

Oh that the eare to seek the face of
the Lord did neuer waxe cold within
mee, but daily more & more increa-
sed.

How-

of the Imitation of Christ.

Howbeit, the soule that loveth God, hath a wonderfull desire to enioy the sight of God. For to see him is happinesse indeede, and the absolute felicitie.

c Reu. 22. 4

Wherefore shee desireth this blessednesse, that her whole appetite, hauing attained her end, shee may bee satisfied, and at quiet: for nothing in the world is able to content her.

d Ecclu. 1. 8

For long experience hath taught her, that the more she straieth from celestiaall happines, the more vnhappie and vnquiet she is, inasmuch as in this world nothing is permanent, or durable, that may assuage the heate of her affection.

e 1. Cor. 7.

31.

1. Ioh. 2. 15,

16. 17.

f Gen. 1. 26.

27.

Wisd. 2. 23.

So then let her make return vnto him that made her, and let her desire to be blessed of him, who at the first created her. For doubtlesse, hee that made the soule, must satisfie the soule with good things. Because, such a desire hath hee instilled into her, that he being gone, nothing will content her: nor anie ioy comfort her greatly.

g Ps. 103. 5

And therefore soule of mine, stand not here still, for this is no place of rest for thee: but mount aloft, ascend

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scend vnto him that made thee. For he hath now sent his messengers, and biddeth thee to ascend.

So manie desires of eternall life as he inspireth, so many messengers he doth send. Which being entertained, prepare thy selfe to the iournie.

Then goest thou on, when thou desirest to see him, when thou labourest to please him, when thou renouncest this world, when thou doest whatsoeuer thou doest, euen of pure loue to him-ward.

For had he not first sought thee, & poured holy cogitations into thy brest, thou couldst neuer seeke him.
h Ioh. 6. 44.

For that soule doth languish, not for loue, but through wearinesse, which is not enlightened with the beams of the eternall Sunne.
a. Ioh. 1. 9.

But, if through the sweet blastes of the Southern winde, her frozen coldnesse, and sorrow be once resolved, then by reason of the light inspired, and incomprehensible diuinity, she beginneth to sweat, through the hotnesse of loue.

Oh infinite heate of the true Sunne, what boilings doest thou cause then within the heart of the louer?

of the Imitation of Christ.

louer? Thou dissoluest the darknesse
of a sorrowfull minde, and bringest
the laboursome toile vnto nothing.
The long time and daies of pouertie
thou doest comfort and that abund-
antly, with one simple beame of thy
glorious light.

O salue of the sorrowfull ^k! O shi- ^k Mat. 9. 13
ning light of such as wander & seek!
Shine thou continually vpon mee;
prepare thou a mansion place within
mee, euen till thine euermlasting light
doth appeare.

Oh how sweet, and how comforta-
ble will thy presence be! seeing euen
of a littrie remembrance, so vnspeake-
able ioy doth arise.

How gladly can I turne vnto thee,
how frankely doe I renounce euen
this world, that I may be comforted
with thy heauenly fauour!

For it will bee none hard matter
for the soule which longeth for the
sight of thy countenance, to bereaue
her selfe of all outward pleasure,
when shee shall either seele now a
greater in the minde, or verie short-
ly expect with a perfect faith for the
same.

Furthermore, none is to be so soo-
lish.

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lish as to thinke, that thou wilt haue the deuout soule anie long while vncomforted; or that the gifts of thy fauour which she is to receiue for all her conquests ouer nature, shall bee small: for no earthly comfort, whatsoever it bee, or whence soeuer it arise, is anie whit comparable either in the qualitie or quantitie of sweetness to the heavenly ioy.

And therefore labour thou, O faithfull soule, to shew thy selfe such toward thine heavenly Spouse Christ, that he may continually be gracious & fauourable vnto thee; for through him and in him you shall in most abundant manner find that, which exceedingly shall minister comfort vnto you in all extremities.

The oftner you haue access vnto him, & the nigher you doe approach vnto his side, the sweeter he will appeare, and the more amiable in your eyes. But if you withdraw your selfe, then the losse will be your owne, and hee abiding in his beautie, shall feelee neither grieve nor trouble.

You stand in need of his, but he of no mans goodnesse.

So that you may become blessed through

through him, but so cannot wee by
your proceeding.

Hee alone suffereth himselfe; hee
alone can neither be augmented, nor
diminished.

Through his goodnesse all things
are, whatsoeuer be, whether they
haue life, sense, or vnderstanding 1. 1 A2. 17. 28

And therefore iust it is that all
creatures euerlastingly should blesse
him m.

m Pf. 150. 6.

Oh how gladly would I discourse
and speake of him vnto thee, if I
were able sufficiently so to doe!

But what? He neither is, nor may
be vttered. Againe, as hee cannot be
vttered by meanes, so can he not bee
conceined in minde.

Which being so, thinke notwith-
standing of thy Creatour so well as
man may, taking the remembrance
of his abundant sweetnesse for a
comfort, vntill such time as hee
reuealeth the light of his
owne countenance
vnto thee in the
heavens 2.

2 Ren. 32. 4

chap.

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CHAP. 20.

1. A complaint of the Soule for the want of her blessed state. 2. what weeping pleaseth God. 3. Who truly blessed. 4. A description of God.

a Pl. 31. 22.



Said in mine heart I am
cast out of thy sight.

Mine heart is wounded
within mee,
through the long de-
ferring of thy glorie.

I will speake therefore, and reason
with my griued Soule. The great
zeale of loue compelleth mee to
speake, and suffereth nothing to be
concealed from thee. What then
shall I say? Lo my God, in peace is
my most bitter bitterneſſe,

Hee that is ignorant, wotterh not
the meaning hereof. But it is not so
with me; I know, and I vnderstand
it, and therefore I am not ashamed to
sing with the Prophet.

b Pl. 38. 15.

c Reu. 3. 15.

Eccle. 4. 2.

30.

I speake to thee my Lord b, who
knowest all things, and givest both
knowledge and vnderstanding ac-
cording to thy good pleasure, that
neither

of the Imitation of Christ.

neither I may glorie more than is meete I should, nor the foole aduance mee, when in truth I am simple.

I may confesse then what I haue receiued from thee. And yet what neede haue I to tell you thereof, when as you are neither ignorant, nor can take any pleasure of the same?

Againe, what comfort can come vnto you, which are the comfort of the comfortlesse?

So that the profit is mine, which doe lacke the consolation of words, thereby to stirre vp mine affection to thee-ward, and to finde some ease for my desolate soule. For, seeing I may not behold thy presence, I will bewaile thine absence, because euen this is a token of loue, and a great pleasure to the louing soule.

Now then the sense of this sentence appeareth. Because it is rightly said of the louing soule, how the more feruently she loueth, and the more earnestly she longeth after eternall things, the more truly shee feeleth the power thereof working within her.

They

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They are not cold words, but to the vnkinde soule; neither deafe organs, but to the hardened heart.

The louing & zealous soule knoweth this well; and is so often inflamed in heart, as shee is pricked with the desire of eternall peace.

And therefore she speaketh to thee her Lord God, not to men, of whom she would not be knowne.

And although sometime shee talketh with men: yet that which they heare is to the outward sense. But whatsoeuer shee saith to thee, it is to the very soule, & rather by sighing of the heart, than by sounding words.

Lo (saith she) in peace is my most bitter bitternesse. As if she said; After that of thy goodnesse I returned vnto the peace of minde, the transitorie state of the world began to bee still more gricuous vnto mee. For I see in this peace, how farre I am separated from the soueraigne peace.

And indeed being first busied with earthly desires, & moued with diuers passions, I was greatly hindered from spirituall cogitations, and so from heauenly contemplation, after which I should haue much longed: but that
could

could I least of all doe, because through slothfulnesse I did forgoe all sense of inward sorrow. But now seeing the troubles of idle thoughts are taken away, I do somewhat rest in the peace of conscience, & am drawn vnto heavenly matters with mine whole heart, & I do more lament, that I do not enjoy the good things of God, than erst I did mourne being vexed with the troubles of this world.

So that it is bitternesse to my soule euen to liue in this world, and to go vnder the heauie burden of sinne. But it is bitterest of al, when so much as I may, all mine affections being gathered together, I doe enjoy now the good things of the heart, & bend my selfe, euen with heartie zeale toward the armes of eternall peace, and yet may not obtaine thereunto, because of the bonds of my mortall state.

And this makes mee euen with griefe of heart to crie vnto thee, and to say; *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliuer me from the bodie of this death.*

d Ro. 7. 24

There is none so grieuous a burden vnto me, as still to wander from thee
by

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by lining in the world ; for labouring
in loue, I wish for no comfort beside
thee.

For by good experience I haue
long since learned, that my soule can
neither bee satisfied with the good
e Eccl. 1.8 things of this world^e, nor yet be blef-
sed, vntill she be ioyned vnto thee in
the celestially habitation.

For as exceedingly she doth loue,
burne, and vse contemplation while
she is in the bodie : so will her desire
be insatiable vntill the body bee laid
off. And therefore her end must bee
made perfect by attaining the soue-
raigne felicitie, and the light of thy
f Reu. 2 3. 4. countenance f.

g 1. Tim. 6.
16.

Reuel. 1. 8.

Reu. 17. 14.

h Ps. 16. 11.

O King of heauen^s, so amiable
in all respects; O my all louely Be-
loued, euen wholly to bee desired,
when wilt thou fill me with the light
of thy countenance^h; when wilt
thou satisfie my longing with the
well of life ?

My soule hath much thirsted after
i Psal. 42. 3. theeⁱ, and greatly will bee troubled
vntill she attaine thee.

Lining in the world, and not see-
ing thee, I can take no comfort of
whatsoever I behold ; so greatly
doth

doth zeale waxe hot, that not once,
but often I breake into these words,
When shall I come, and appeare be-
fore the face of my God^k?

k Psal. 42.2.

And this lone of mine ceaseth not,
but encreaseth more and more, in
such sort, that I am driuen euen to
weepe night and day, while conti-
nually I doe thinke with my selfe,
Where is now my God?

For it is a comfort for the louing
soule to weepe for thy sake, while she
must want her desire, and still expect
thy comming.

And these tears do more feed and
refresh the louing soule, than if shee
enjoyed all the things of this world.
For did she loue them^l, shee would
not weepe for thee.

l Mat. 24.6.

Oh how blessed, & pleasing to thee
is the shedding of such teares!

For they doe both kill the desires
of secular and temporall ioyes: and
also they obtaine the celestiaall con-
solation. And therefore none doe
shed such holy teares, but they which
are both singularly in loue, and verie
notably religious.

Far of another kinde be the teares
of such as miserably bee troubled in
this

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m Psa. 119.
137.

this world. For one man weepeth because he is sick, another for that he is oppressed, another because hee is injured, another because his minde is contrariet: but it is thou, religious soule only, which pourest forth teares euen of pure loue to thy Saviourward: as for temporall dammage, and worldly causes, they trouble thee not, for thou submittest thy selfe to the righteous iudgement of God, and art thankfull.

And for so doing, let no worldly creature iudge thee either foolish, or impatient: because thy teares do not grieue but comfort; they doe not blurre the face, but wash it; they hurt not the eies, but they purifie the sight of the minde.

Howbeit, let others conceine heereof as they will, I cannot thinke otherwise than well of you: for I doe wish to drinke deep of such teares.

S. If you wish to weepe with me, then may you bee comforted with me.

Oh that your soule were as I am! you could neuer forget what I doe feele.

of the Imitation of Christ.

I know whom I credit, & sure I am it is a more easie thing to denie that there is any heauen and earth, than that there is a God. And I know also he is my full happinesse, & that I shal neuer bee blessed vntill I haue an absolute sight of his maiestie.

n Reu. 22. 4

Whose sight because it is not yet granted me, nor alwaies assured mee, doth make me to lamēt, inasmuch as I am deprived of happinesse, wrapped in the darknesse of this life, & down-peised with the waight of mine own infirmity, that I am not of power to suffer that wonderfull light, and that wharsoener I do think cōcerning the glorie of heauen, is so little, & overshadowed as it were with a cloud.

o Wis. 9. 15

Hence it is that I double my complaint in stead of a song: and while they still say vnto mee, *Where is thy God?* my spirit is the more troubled.

p Ps. 41. 20.

For thus I thinke then, *where is my felicity? where is the full ioy of mine heart? where is my true peace & rest?*

Where be all the good things that are vnspeakeable, but onely in my God? And when shall I enioy them, vnlesse I be ioyned vnto him, hauing nothing betweene?

I

Yea,

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Yea, when shall I there bee? I know not, but I beleue well; I do hope well, but yet I haue not.

Why then, where is my God, whom I loue so, and yet I see him not? through whose loue I am so often wounded; through whose absence I am so griued; through whose gracious visitation so refreshed sometime?

Where is my God, whom euen once to see is to know all things?

Where is my God, in whom both mine heart, and my flesh doe so earnestly desire to reioyce?

Where is my God, for whose loue I suffer such paine and sorrow? His verie remembrance is sweete, but his presence is more louely, and expelleth all sadnesse from mine heart.

Where is mine hope, and my crowne? Is it not in thee my God,
¶ 1. Cor. 13. and in thy blessed countenance?

¶ 2.

Oh, shew mee once thy glorie, and thy face: so will I cease to complain.

If I contend a little with thee, O blame mee not; extreame zeale of good will hath many wonderfull deuices.

I am driuen to expect, and moued
still

of the Imitation of Christ.

still to long; and so this ioyfull combat doth continue.

CHAP. 21.

1. The delaying of the happie is patiently to be borne. 2. The felicitie of the life to come. 3. with a prayer for the same.



Lord, I haue loued the habitation of thine house, & the place where thine honour dwelleth. ^a Psal. 26. 8

How gladly I would be with thee, thou knowest full well O my God; and how entirely I desire the same, I am not able sufficiently to expresse.

I wish it not onely when I am euill at ease; but also what prosperitie soeuer I enioy, my desire is to bee with thee.

But how shall my longing bee satisfied?

Here it grieueth me to continue ^b, ^b Phil. 1. 23. and yet of necessitie I must, but my desire is to be with thee, and I may not yet.

And therefore I see no remedie,
1 2 but

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but that I am with patience to endure this delay, and to referre my wishing to thine holy will.

For what? Is it meet I should mur-
mure, when it must be so? God for-
bid. Againe, I haue the examples of
many of Gods children which haue
used long patience in this life ^b, and
yet their hearts were in heaven ^c.

^b Heb. 11.

11. 14. & 6.

^c Col. 3. 1. 2.

Therefore if thy will be to prolong
my pilgrimage, I am willing to abide
and obey your pleasure.

Howbeit, that with lesse grief I may
beare my longing to be with thee, I
will till that time still meditate with
my selfe of that celestially habitation.

Yet I presume not to pierce into
the least of those ioyes, which thou
hast prepared for such as loue thee:
but of this and that will I meditate,
to the end that my affection being
pressed downe and infected often-
times, it may be stirred vp, and lifted
into the hope of eternall blisse.

^d 1. Cor. 3. 9

Oh that that day had once shined,
whither then had the ioyes of heauen
rauisht me! How merry at the heart
should I bee then, and how happie
should I thinke my selfe!

How happie should I then bee,
enioy-

Chap. 21. 173 Frukt of godly meditation
of the Imitation of Christ.

enjoying a continuall peace.

• Rom. 21. 6

From thenceforth should I make none enquirie for anie thing, seeing no secret could be hid. But my life is spent in darknesse, and therefore no maruell though my sight doe dazle between the clouds of glorie.

Notwithstanding I will lift vp mine eyes, and though a farre off, behold and salute that holy Citie Ierusalem builded in the heauen euen of liuely stones, namely of holy angels, and men, replenished continually with praise and mirth, and magnifying the Lord their God for ever and ever.

Now therefore my soule, take vnto thee the wings of desire, and flye vpward, flye I say from all bodily senses: ascend from the visible forme of this world, vnto the holy house of God, euen vnto the new Ierusalem, builded substantially in aye lasting peace, crowned with glorie and honour, and blessed with the abundance of all good things.

Lo, Wonderfull and vnspeakeable are the things (of heauen) which no man either can or may vtter.

g1. Cor. 13. 9

No sense is able to conceine, neither can the vnderstanding of man

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attaine to know, how God is in his Saints glorious, and wonderfull in maiestie.

Mount thou in cogitation euen vnto the highest things, stretch thy desire into the euerlasting eternitie, and say with the Prophet: *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O Citie of God.*

There whatsoever can be wished of man, is had: and what is once got, is kept without care.

God there is beheld face to face cleerely, truly, continually, and eternally.

There the blessed and all glorious Trinitie, in one vnseparable vnitie, which of all the blessed Citizens of heauen is worshipped, praised, and magnified, is perfectly knowne.

There is mine onely and right singularly beloued friend, which is more precious (to mee) than all riches; and the treasure aboue all to be desired, euen my Lord Iesus Christ, the immortall Spouse of the Church, in whom are hid (but yet revealed to the Saints) from the beginning of the world, the whole treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

of the Imitation of Christ.

O how iocund are the Saints now
before the face of the most Holy,
who is the cause and spring of their
blessednesse!

For there hee speaketh vnto them
not in parables, but plainly of the
Father.

1 Ioh. 16. 29

Hee is their Booke, euen the word
which in the beginning was with
God, teaching all things and per- u Iohn 1. 8.
forming all things, so that they want
nothing in glorie.

O blessed and euerlasting glorie,
not of small remembrance, but all
happie in God his presence.

There is also the most glorious
Mother of our Saviour, and constant
virgin Marie, beautifying the whole
celestiall Court with her comelinesse
and beautie, compassed and accom-
panied with troupes of virgins, as
with sweete Roses and Lillies of the
vallies.

x Gen. 49.

10.

Num. 24. 17

Dan. 9. 24.

25.

Isai. 7. 14.

Ier. 31. 22.

Psa. 13. 2. 17.

Hag. 1. 8. 10

There be the Angels and Archan-
gels, placed in order, who most cheer-
fully sound forth the praises of God.

There be the Patriarchs and Pro-
phets, euen they which being fil-
led long agoe with the holy Ghost,
did foretell of Christ his comming,

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whom now they both know, & euer-
more confesse to bee their Lord and
7 Reu. 7. 14 Saviour, the King of kings, and per-
Reu. 19. 16 fect God. There they behold eye to
eye their Redcemer, whom long
they looked for, and for whose com-
ming they longed.

There be the Lords Apostles, and
Disciples, those most reuerend and
renowned Fathers, which were filled
with holinesse and grace, and laida
strong foundation of the Catholike
faith.

There especially shineth that reue-
rend man Iohn, which baptized our
2 Mat. 3. 13. Saviour Christ, and was a speciall
14. &c. friend of my Spouse.

Mar. 1. 9. 10. There is Peter, and Paul, and An-
Luk. 3. 31. drew, and Philip, and Thomas, and
1 Ioh. 20. 3. James, and Iohn, and all the other
Ioh. 21. 7. 20 Apostles and Euangelists, pillars of
the Church.

To keepe the faith, and to follow
the example of these men, is the rea-
die way to euerlasting life.

Moreouer, there bee the valiant
Martyrs enriched with their proper
bloud, and euerlastingly blessed with
Christ, whose bodies though they
were most cruelly fleane: yet could
not

of the Imitation of Christ.

nor their soules by any torments bee leuered from Christ.

Also, there bee the noble Confessors, which contemned this present life, that they might be in heauen.

There bee the great and glorious Doctors, that were so carried aloft in contemplation, of which many haue left a linely image of holiness in their writings.

There be young men and maidens, old men and children praising the Name of the Lord continually, and ascribing the goodnesse which they had at anie time vnto his mercie.

There they are, I say, alway grateful, alway zealous, alway iocund, alway religious, neuer loathing, but euer louing the Lord. Oh, how glorious is this Kingdome, where all the Saints do raigne with Christ, arraied with the fairest roabe^b, and be without care of the other!

^b Rev. 16.

11.

There they follow the Lambe ^{Rev. 7. 13.} wheresoeuer hee goeth^c, for they ^c ^{Rev. 14. 4.} cannot part; but reioycing euerslastingly, shall reioyce in the Lord.

O my Soule, muse thou vpon these things, and cast thy thoughts vpon heauenly matters,

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That place indeede is an holy place, and God is in the same.

d Rev. 21. 4 There is surpassing ioy & peace; good things abound, and evils there be none.

Oh if thou couldest euen a little comprehend the vnspeakeable ioyes of God his Saints, then should you finde some comfort. For in mee you shall be sure to finde nothing but labour and sorrow, and tentations, and troubles of this world.

e Ism. i. 17. Oh that the giuer of supernall light would vouchsafe to inspire some portion of these ioyes into you, and not send you back vnto my new withering foode, but according to the riches of his superabundant mercie, purifie and ridde you of all materiall formes, and bring you, yea by force, into the depth of his eternal brightnesse.

Would to God you could carrie backe from that heavenly sanctuarie, a form and example of true holinesse which you might imitate.

For better and more true are the examples of celestially, and strong things, than they which are confirmed by earthly demonstrations.

There

Chap. xlv. 179 God the teacher of the
of the Imitation of Christ.

Therefore grant Lord, that I may
 favour and know what the perfect fe-
 licitie of Saints is, not so much by
 written bookes thereof, as by the ho-
 ly Ghost, which teacheth of celesti-
 all secrets in such sort, as no sense of
 man is able to reach thereunto.

Grant also that from henceforth I
 may lift vp my mind more seruenly
 vnto heauenly things; and amidst my
 grievous troubles, valiantly bear the
 garland of patience, till the debt of
 flesh being paid, I may attaine
 through thy mercie vnto this felicity
 that I so desire.



chap.

CHAP. 22.

1. A godly meditation, concerning the acceſſe vnto the holy of holies, euen Ieſus Chriſt, the King of Angels. 2. Godly petitions for the forgiveness of finnes.

Psal. 44. 4.



How art my King, O God?

Arise now my soule, come, and enter into the wonderfull Tabernacle, euen into the House of God.

For it is meete that omitting other things, thou with all reuerence doe
Rom. 1. 3. Mat. 1. 21. Gal. 1. 13. Christ^h, thy Sauour^e, & Redeemer^e,
Ren. 12. 14 which is the head of all principalities
Col. 1. 27. and power^e; the ioy and crowne of
Pla. 100. 3 all Saints, the assured trust and cer-
Psa. 119. 71 taine hope of all the faithfull^e.

Hee it is which hath made^e, and
Isai. 53. 3. redeemed thee^h; he it is which hath
4. & c. for thy sake both laboured^l, striven^h,
1. Cor. 15. 34. & c. and overcome^l.

Hee is thine Aduocate^m, and the
Mat. 4. 10. propitiation for thy sins.

John 16. 33. He is thy comforter, thy prouider,
1. Ioh. 2. 1 and thy Lord^a.

He

of the Imitation of Christ.

He is thine only & singular friend
that feedeth among the Lillies ^o, and ^o Sal. 2. 16.
loueth to rest him vpon thy breasts P. p Sal. 3. 1. 12.

Who euer hath done the like for
thee? who euer loued you so entirely?

Come thou vnto him, offer your
selte to him, open your whole heart,
and vnfold euen your hidden secrets
vnto him.

For no man will better either de-
clare, or else reueale how you should
behaue your self in this world, in the
which, things fall out so strangely.

Let your wishes and prayers be di-
rected vnto him; and in him let all
your counsailes abide.

Vaine is the hope of man ⁹; but ⁹ Psal 42. 9
he is the vpholder of peace.

Through him wee haue open ac-
cesse vnto the Father ⁸, and from ⁸ Eph. 2. 18.
him wee receiue all goodnesse, and
vertue ⁸ 1. Cor. 2.

Whether you mourne, or whether ^{10. 31.}
you reioyce, make continuall re-
course vnto him.

Hee is the glasse of life, the rule
of righteousness, the light of the
soule, the loue of shamesfastnesse, and
the ioy of a good conscience.

If thou louest him, it will be none
hard

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hard matter for thee to despise the
vaine pleasures of this world; if thou
louest him, all sower things will seem
sweet; all heauie things will seeme
light; and that which otherwise you
should mislike, you will like right
well for his sake.

To be brieft, of him, and through
him, and for him, are all things.

The principall end both of all our
thoughts, and of all our actions, and
of our speech, and of our reading,
praying, meditating, and speculation,
should be Iesus Christ.

Through him you attaine saluation
on ^x, and euerlasting life.

For his loue you will neither feare
to die ^y, nor refuse to liue ^z; because

you are to commit your selfe wholly
to his trust, and to preferre nothing
before his loue, and honour.

Wherefore come neere, and giue
thanks to thy Redeemer.

O most sweete Iesu, aboue all
things to be loued, I salute thee most
religiously, I commend thee most
highly, & I blesse thee now & euer
lastingly with all thy creatures.

O most renowned Iesu, how can
I praise thee as I ought? When

of the Imitation of Christ.

shall I thanke thee, as I am bound, in that thy mercies are so infinite to me-ward.

Againe, whatsoever I giue, it is thy gift, and I receiued it from thee^a. But little or nothing it is that I haue: and can I then sacrifice of nothing? 1. Cor, 4.

Howbeit, accept I beseech thee, mine humble, base, and vile sacrifice, and let my gifts bee ascribed to thy goodnesse.

Let the quires of heavenly Angels attending about thee, sound forth thine infinite praises on my behalfe: also let the soules of the righteous repeate the same.

In the meane while what shall I doe in memorie, and praise of thy most sacred name?

Much I ought to doe, & for manie things I am greatly bound; yet am I not able to performe the least.

And therefore I will read of thee, O my sweete Sauour, I will write of thee, I will sing of thee, I will thinke of thee, I will speake of thee, I will worke for thee, and for thee will I suffer.

In thee will I reioyce, thee will I praise.

The fourth booke

praise, thee will I magnifie, thee will I glorifie.

As it is meete I will worship thee,
b Mat. 4. 10. because thou art my God^b, in whom
I beleue, whom I doe loue, seeke,
and haue alway desired.

Giue mee some good signe, that
mine eyes may behold thy goodly
countenance in the heauens.

Humbly I do throw down my selfe
at thy feete in heart, earnestly with
teares desiring thy fauour, that thou
wilt vouchsafe to be good vnto me.

Write my name in thy Booke of
life; and let that neuer bee out blot-
ted, which thine holy hand hath
written.

I, wretch that I am, and farre infe-
rior to any of thy Saints, yet trusting
boldly vpon the more than excel-
lent prerogative of thy mercie, be-
seech thee, that at the leastwise I
may bee counted among the base
and worst of thine elect.

I confesse, my life and conversati-
on is not such, that I dare presume
anie thing of my selfe; and therefore
all mine hope and comfort is, and
resteth in the price of thy precious
blood, wherein I doe wholly repose
my

of the Imitation of Christ.

my selfe, and deeme it requisite that I should do so, together with all which I haue done, offended, deserued and omitted. And therefore behold, most gracious Iesu, my basenesse and humilitie, consider the affection of mine heart which I beare toward thee, not for thy merit, but for thy mercy sake, which vouchsafest to bee loued euen of the vnworthie.

In respect of mine vnworthinesse I am greatly ashamed to come in thy presence; but I am drawn on and emboldned through your wonderfull goodnesse and humilitie^b, which hast ^b Mat. 27. in perfect good will ^c yeelded not on- 28. 29. ly to become man ^d, but also to suf- ^c Rom. 5. 7. fer^e, die, and to bee buried for my ^d Ioh. 1. 14. sake : and therefore vnto thee doe I ^e I sa. 53. 3. 4. &c. make recourse, for I find no goodnes in my selfe.

Supplic that for my sake, which of my selfe I cannot performe.

Thou hast giuen mee a desire^f to ^f Phil. 1. 13. pray vnto thee, to praise, and to bless thee : because thou art mine hope, & my portion in the land of the liuing. ^g Psa. 143. 3. All my desire is to be with thee in the kingdome of heauen; but inasmuch as my time is not yet come, I will waite vntill

The fourth booke

vntil the night approach. In the mean while this may bee my comfort in the place of my pilgrimage, that I am mindfull of thy name, & of rhine exceeding great loue, & that I behold thee in this life by the eies of my faith.

To liue in this world, and yet to repose no trust in thee, O Lord, were a thing intolerable to my soule. I doe not consent to reioyce with the world^h; and that I may not abide without ioy & comfort, I haue determined to place my ioy in theeⁱ.

^h Luk. 6. 23
ⁱ 1. Cor. 1.
31.

Much & often should I go astray, greatly should I be tossed in cogitations, did I not retaine thee fast in my minde, and thoughts.

And forsomuch as I am vnable to sound the depth of thy diuinitie, I thinke it best for mee to turne vnto the deedes and sayings of thine humanitie; because, being in these cogitations, I swarue not altogether from thy diuinitie.

Thanks bee to thee, good Iesu, sweere and lonely Iesu, for vouchsafing to become my brother, to take my flesh and bones vpon thee^h.

^h Ioh. 1. 14.
Mat. 1. 23.

Thanks I say to thee for entering

of the Imitation of Christ

ring into the wombe of good Marie
thy mother, of whose maidenly flesh
thou tookest the holy members of
thy body, which thou diddest vnite
to thy diuine nature.

CHAP. 23.

A godly prayer, and commen-
dation of our Saviour
Christ.



Notwithstanding I am
wicked, and guiltie of
manifold sins, yet haue
I great hope of salua-
tion, because of thy
suffering, and merits:
whereof as I haue a good minde
to consider, so grant, O my Lord
Christ, that I may with good leaue
so doe.

For who am I to approach nigh vn-
to thee, vnlesse I haue licence?

I know mine vnworthinesse to
appeare in his presence, whom the
verie Angels doe worship with great
reuerence, saying:

Who is this that commeth out of
the wilderness of this world, so aboun-
ding in pleasure?

There-

The fourth booke

a Eccius. 10
9.

Therefore, O most blessed Saviour, I am farre vnmeet to thinke of thy glorie and honour, of thy beauty & magnificence; because I am, earth and ashes ^a, yea more base am I than earth and ashes, because I am sinfull, and prone vnto all wickednesse.

b Mat. 28.
18.
Heb. 2.8.

But thou being made higher than heauen, hast the whole world vnder thy feete ^b, and art worthy to be praised and honoured for euermore.

Howbeit of thine vnspokeable goodnesse, which passeth all vnderstanding, I am drawn in affection vnto thee, because thou art the comfort of the comfortlesse, and vset most willingly to helpe most miserable sinners.

I acknowledge how I am not onely destitute of all comfort, especially of thy fauour; but also verie vnable to doe good vnto my selfe.

But mercifull Iesus, wouldest thou vouchsafe to consider my basenesse, then should I both be ayded & comforted most plentifully in this my trouble.

Therefore I see well, whensoever I am compassed about with affliction and temptation, I am straight way

of the Imitation of Christ.

and without feare to flie vnto thee?
for where mercy is most ready, there
grace is in greatest plentie.

And when I haue a good minde to
consider of thy most glorious estate,
and to commend thee in most ho-
nourable manner, I must come forth
with a much purer affection, & may
not goe forward without the condu-
ction of Gods heavenly light.

Assuredly he shall haue no glorie,
but shame, that presumeth without
all reuerence to approach vnto thy
gate.

And he which commeth therinto,
must proceed with all reuerence and
humilitie, ioyned with good hope,
that he may finde grace to be admit-
ted.

Wherefore both humbly, and re-
uerently, and deuoutly, and boldly I
goe to thee-ward.

Let the godly louer of thy name
listen then what I say.

The heauen reioyceth, the earth
wondereth, when by faith mine heart
saith, Christ is my Saviour.

Sathan flieth, hell trembleth, when
my conscience cryeth, Christ is my
Saviour.

The

The fourth Booke

The world waxeth vile, and the flesh humble, when as a Christian doth say, Christ is my Sauiour.

Sorrow departeth, new comfort approacheth, when my minde pronounceth, Christ is my Sauiour.

Slothfulnesse vanisheth, mine heart through loue fainteth, when zealously I can say, Christ is my Sauiour.

Zeale encreaseth, compunction ariseth, hope groweth, comfort waxeth strong, when my soule soundeth, Christ is my Sauiour.

Mine heart is ioycond, mine affection becommeth sound, when in truth I doe say, Christ is my Sauiour.

For such is the force of these words vttered of a faithfull soule, that no man is able to expresse the same in words, but still it resteth more high and excellent, than may bee reached vnto by the wit of man.

Which maketh mee once againe most humbly to bowe my knees vnto thee, O blessed Sauiour, and still I say, O Christ my Sauiour.

O most gracious Iesu receiue my prayer, and mee with it, that I may finde somewhat that may like thee well, and embolden mee, and kindle my

my zeale, and keepe mee euermore
in continuall praising of thine holy
Name.

Oh that for the satisfying my de-
sire to praise, and to pray vnto thee
from the verie bottome of my heart,
both all my members were forthwith
conuerred into tongues, and those
tongues into fierie voices, that I
might find a way to glorifie thee, my
Saiour, world without end!

Oh that for all my sins wherewith
I haue deserued thine indignation,
offended grieuously thy father, and
dishonored thee, with all the hoste of
heauen, I might once so thoroughly
bewaile, and repent, that I might
hereafter take a new trade of life, to
thy glorie, and the comfort of my
soule.

Oh that thou wouldest assist mee
in well doing, seeing my life fraile &
all subiect to offending!

Oh pardon & forgieue all my sins,
either wilfully or negligently com-
mitted, all my vaine thoughts, my
vngodly speeches, my abominable
deedes!

O most gracious Iesu, I say, doe
thou both defend mee from doing
anie

The fourth Booke

anie wickednesse hereafter, and forgive, I pray thee, all my sinnes forpast: so shall I bee both more deuout the more zealous, and the more caretull in saying, thou Christ art my Sauour, both in mine heart, and with my mouth, in companie, and in my chamber, and in the garden, & in the field, and in all places wheresoeuer I shall be.

And now, what more shall I aske of thee O Christ my Sauour?

What is better, or more profitable, or more necessarie, especially for mee a great sinner, than to find fauour in thy sight, O Christ my Sauour? And therefore it is that I haue desired and still doe craue, euen that by thine intercession and meanes, I may haue the grace of God thy Father, who, as both thy selfe hath said, and the Apostle doth witnesse, hath all power giuen thee both in heauen

c Mat. 28. 18 and earth.

There is no praier more welcome to thee than this is, nor anie thing more necessarie for mee, than the grace and fauour of God.

If I haue the grace of God, whatesoeuer else I doe want, I am rich enough

of the Imitation of Christ.

enough.

For what is all my endeavouring if I lacke that? Againe, what can I not doe, if I bee assisted and holpen thereby?

I see that many and diuers are my wicked affections; but yet against all passions the grace of God is a most effectuall medicine, and if once it come, it will mitigate them all.

I do also stand in need of spirituall wisdome and knowledge: but the grace of God is a most excellent teacher, & instructor of heauenly knowledge, and is able euen suddenly to instruct me in whatsoeuer things are necessary vnto saluation.

For to require more than is necessary, or to desire to vnderstand more than is lawful to be known, is against the will of God, whose pleasure is that we should be humbled vnder his hand, and contented with his grace.

Wherefore obtaine this grace for me, O Christ, which is so noble and precious, that indeed I ought neither to desire or craue any other thing than grace for grace.

The fourth booke

CHAP. 24.

A prayer for comfort vnto
Iesus christ.

a Psal. 45. 2.



*Grace is poured into thy
ip. 2.*

Oh my Lord, I be-
seech thee, at the
length now vouchsafe
to speak vnto mee, O
Christ. Open thy mouth in thine
owne name, who art full of all spiri-
tull graces b.

b Ioh. 1. 16.

L. I am the fountain of mercie, full
of loue and sweetnesse.

I am the Ladder for sinners, the
hope and pardon of the guiltie.

I am the comfort of the sorrowful,
and the speciall ioy of all Saints.

Come vnto mee so many as loue
me, and fill your selues at the breasts
of my comfort, because I am good
and mercifull to all which crie vnto
me.

Come vnto me both righteous and
sinners, I will sue vnto the Father for
you; I will intreate him to bee good
vnto you, and to fill you with the ho-
ly Ghost.

of the Imitation of Christ.

I call euerie one, I looke for all, I
desire to haue all to come vnto me, I
despise no sinner, but with the angels
in heauen I reioyce exceedingly ouer
that sinner which repenteth^e, and so c. Luk. 15. 30
commeth into the fauour of God:
for no one drop of my bloud which I
shed for the world, is in vaine.

Therefore come vnto mee yee
sonnes of men, consider and behold
my zeale for you vnto God my Fa-
ther.

Lo, I haue taken his wrath vpon
my selfe, I haue borne his displea-
sure^d, yea, and continually doe I^d Iſa. 53.
make supplication vnto him for you^e, 12. & c.
whom you know right well you haue^e 1. Ioh. 1. 9
griuously offended.

Turne then, and approach, repent,
and of my word you shall haue par-
don.

For lo, I stand betweene heauen
and earth, betweene God and sin-
ners; and that this world perish not,
I obtaine through my praier.

Wherefore abuse not my goodnesse
and mercie; but beware of offending,
lest when you little thinke thereof^e, Mat. 24.
indignation be poured vpon you, 44.
and intolerable vengeance & Rom. 2.

The fourth Booke

I doe forewarne you as children, I
beseech you as friends, bee you per-
fect as your heauenly Father is per-
fect.
h Mat. 5.48

Forget not mee, who haue beene,
and am, and will be mindfull of you.

For I doe both pitie such as are in
miserie, and I doe entreate for those
i loh. 2.1.2. which crie vnto me.

S. O gracious speech, and full of all
comfort!

O heauenly voice, sweetly drop-
ping from heauen to the comforting
of sinners, and reioycing of the righ-
teous.

O celestiall musicke, how sweetly
doest thou resound in a desperate
conscience!

Whence is it that the Sauour of
mankinde will thus talke with me?

Blessed art thou, O Christ, & blef-
sed are the words of thy mouth. For
honie is vnder thy tongne, & the fa-
uor of thy speech excelleth all sweet-
nesse. My soule was mollified, so soon
as thou spakest, O Christ.

Behold, no sooner did thy voyce
sound in mine eares, but my soule
within did spring for ioy. For my spi-
rit reuiued within mee, and all mine
entrails

of the Imitation of Christ.

entrals were filled with new comfort;
because good and ioyfull things are
told me this day by you.

I was dolefull, but now I am iocund
because of your words. For your
voice is sweet in mine eares.

I was griued and desolate; but
now I am reuiued, and made merrie.
For thou hast sent thine hand from
on hie, and touched mee, whereby of
weake I am become strong.

Scarce could I speake: but now I
haue a good minde to sing, and to
praise thee highly.

I was loth to liue, and now I am
willing to dye, because I haue thee,
Christ, for mine Aduocate, with the
Father, to whose mercie I commend
my selfe, euen from this time for euer
and euer. For since first you began to
speake vnto the heart of the desolate
Orphane, I haue been changed into
a better state, and greatly comforted
in my minde.

I was almost at the doore of de-
speration, but thy comfort came and
lifted me vp with these words.

L. What is the matter Son? & who
are they which would hurt thee?
Feare not, I will see vnto thee my

The fourth booke

sonne. I do liue with God my Fa-
 & Rep. 1. 4. ther^k, and I sit at his right hand, be-
 ing a faithfull high Priest, and an In-

1. 1. Joh. 2. 1. tercessor for thy sins¹.

2. In mee thou shouldest repose thy

m Ioha 11. trust, because I doe both giue life²,

25. and destroy death².

n 1. Cor. 15 I was incarnate of a virgin in

55. time³, but of my Father begotten

27. &c. before all times⁴, and when the ful-

p Psal. 2. 7. nels of time came, I suffered for mans

Heb. 1. 5. saluation⁵.

g Gal. 4. 4. Lo, I am the hope and comfort of

3. the godly, and by me is faith and vi-

p 1. Cor. 15. storie attained⁶;

47. And therefore let neither mee, nor

these things be out of thy minde, and

thou wilt not feare anie darts of Sa-

than.

01 S. O happy houre! O blessed state,

that my Lord & Sauour will vouch-

safe to comfort on this wise my trou-

bled heart!

Oh that I might still heare thy

so comfortable words! for greatly

doe they inflame and moue mee,

and touch mee euen at the very

heart,

50. O blessed Christ, thou neuer cea-

sest to send forth the sweet milke of

28001 hea-

of the Imitation of Christ.

heauenly consolation ! For by reason
of the abundance of thy grace, thou
canst not deny fauor to such as craue
the same at thine hands, yet often
thou shewest much mercie euen to
the verie sinner. O Christ, thou ex-
cellest in pitifulnesse, in mercie, & in
louing. O Sauour, to whom none is
to be compared, thou art aboue all to
be loued, and to be worshipped.

O Sonne of God, by whom we are
also the sonnes of God, & of whom
wee are called Christians, thou art
of all good men to bee serued most
religiously, and aboue all.

O friend of all friends, King of
heauen & earth, Lord of Angels,
conqueror of diuels, draw mee after
thee, lest I fall, and so rest vnder the
heauie burden of sin.

Poure out thy grace, send mee thy
comfortable dewe from aboue, that
truely I may perceiue, how thou art
the procurer, and the open fountain
of all mercie.

L. I am indeed the spring of holy
loue, and of chaste & religious feare,
of godly conference, and of sweete
consolation.

Therefore when you do heare

The fourth booke

my name, reioyce with your whole heart, and magnifie the goodnesse of your God. In honouring me, you honour the Father, which is God as I am d. For I am Iesus the Sonne of God^e: and this name shall I haue while the world endureth f.

d Iohn. 1. 1.

2. & c.

e Mat. 1. 18.

20.

f 1. Cor. 15

28.

g Mat. 16. 16

h Mat. 1. 21

i Pet. 1. 18

19.

j Reu. 17. 14

Reu. 19. 16.

k Dan. 7. 10

Heb. 1. 6. 7.

& c.

l Gal. 3. 13.

m Acts 10.

42.

n Mat. 11.

28.

But what is Iesus? euen the Sonne of the liuing God^e, the Sauour of the world^h, the King of heauen and earthⁱ, the Lord of Angels^k, the redeemer of the faithfull^l, & the Iudge of quick and dead^m.

And what is Iesus? the hope of the godly, the comfort of the desolate, the peace of the mecke, the riches of the poore, the glorie of the humble, the strength of the weake, the way of such as wander, the light of such as see not, the staffe of such as walk not, the oyle of such as feeble not, the stay of the oppressed, the helpe of the troubled, and the singular refuge of all good menⁿ.

Blesse the Son with the Father, and so God will blesse you.

Giue honour also and glory to the Father, whensoever you praise me.

His glorie is my ioy, & my praise, is his worship.

Place

of the Imitation of Christ.

Place me and the Father as a seale
vpon thine heart, and as a token vpon
thine arme.

Therefore sit you, or stand you, or
pray, or reade, or wright, or worke
you, let my name Iesus and God bee
often reuerendly in your mouth, but
continually in your heart.

S. O grant it may be so good Iesus,
and let all people, tribes and tongues,
serue thee, and let all creatures bow
at thy presence.

Let heauen say, Reigne thou Iesus,
let the earth make answer, yea, for
euer and euer let him reigne.

Yea, let all Saints confesse thy glo-
rious Name, and all good people re-
ioyce before the Father, and thee his
lambe, and our Lord Iesus Christ, Amen.

o Ioh. 1. 29.
p Rom. 3. 7.



The fourth booke

CHAP. 25.

That for God his benefits wee are
to thank him.

a Psa. 72. 19
b Ioh. 20. 17



Blessed bee the glorious
Name of the Lord for e-
uermore.

a 1. Cor. 10
31.

O. Lord my God,
let all my doings, all
my reading, all my writing, my
thoughts, words, and vnderstanding,
tend vnto the aduancement of thine
honour.

Yea, let me both begin my business
in thy Name, and goe forward in thy
feare, and finish it with thy blessing.

That which thou hast giuen, that
receiue againe; and from whence the
streames doe flow, thither let them
returne.

It neuer goeth better with me, nei-
ther doth it relish better to my soule,
than when vnfaignedly I doe ascribe
all to thee, whatsoeuer I haue either
done or thought as I should.

My desire is to render thanks,
which I then doe as I ought, when
for that I haue receiued, and thou
hast giuen, I ascribe all praise to thee,
and

of the Imitation of Christ.

and nothing to my selfe. For what can I, a wicked and vnprofitable seruant, render vnto thee my God? Alas, all that I can doe, yea, if I should doe all which thou commandest to bee done, it is to none effect ^d.

d Lu. 71. 10

So that I am brought vnto nothing, and rightly humbled. And indeede it is very well that I am so brought downe ^e, that thou alone maicst bee iustified ^f, and haue the praise of all, and that vile dust ^g may at no time glorie in it selfe.

e Ps. 119. 71

f Psal. 51. 4

g Eccles.

10. 9.

Howbeit, I minde not to surceasse, but will extoll thee both with heart & mouth. For albeit I discharge not my duetic therein as I ought: yet ought I to speak of thy goodnes, and not to be silent.

O my God, thou art my glorie, my praise shall alwaies be of thee ^h.

h Psal. 17. 6

He that would but a little consider of thy glorie, and know what it is to glorie in the Lord ⁱ, how would hee despise all outward glorie!

i Ier. 9. 24

Hee that would, euen but a little, taste of thy sweetnesse; how quickly would hee loath, as most bitter, the pleasure of this world?

Hee that would receiue euen but a small

The fourth booke

a small sparkle of loue into his breast, how would hee burne in affection! For full gladly would hee contemne all things to haue thy friendship: and would count it all sweete and easie to bee borne, whatsoever he should doe, or suffer for thy loue sake.

1 Rom. 8.

35.

Hee that would consider in his minde thy goodnesse to man-ward, how would he reioyce and run after thee! Hee would seeke nothing so charily, he would keepe nothing so warily, he would pursue nothing so eagerly, as to serue thee. For in louing, he would feele no burden, because loue would bear all burdens.

1 2aLS.3.6.
7.

So then they which complaine of the burden, doe plainly declare how they haue little true loue in them.

To serue of loue, is of all others the greatest pleasure, and comfort in labour.

True loue doth neither respect commodity, nor feare dammage, but in all things seeketh that which may please thee.

Oh Christ, how sweet is thy loue, how well doth it sound, how sweetly doth it enter, how strongly doth it binde!

Oh

of the Imitation of Christ

his
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Oh that it would fast binde mee
to thy continuall seruice! Oh that it
would wholly take mee, and wholly
subdue mee, and wholly and altoge-
ther make me to be thine!

For then, and not before am I free,
when I am taken of thy loue, and vt-
terly depriued from all that mine is.

O my Lord, I am thy seruant^m, yea
thy seruant am I, because thou hast
redeemed me ⁿ. I am thy seruant with
a verie good will, and am not astra-
med to be properly thine.

m Psa. 143

12.

n 1. Cor. 6.

20.

1. Cor. 7. 23

1. Pet. 1. 19.

I wish not to bee mine owne man
again: and therefore, Lord, helpe
mee, that I may bee freed from that
which naturally is mine.

Oh blowe and kindle, and inflame
the fire of my zeale, so shall mine
heart boile, and become pure, cleare,
and pleasant: for thy loue expelleth
vice, and consumeth sin.

Lay thou fast hold vpon the band
of loue, and I shall stand and conti-
nue in thy seruice.

Full well I wor, no good can my
seruice do you, Lord; but all the be-
nefit redoundeth to my selfe, if I doe
that which I know is acceptable in
thy sight.

Would

The fourth booke

Would I did, and hid not, that I re-
uealed, and concealed not thy works,
Lord.

When shall I bee able worthily to
consider the manifold benefits con-
ferred vpon mee of God? Mercifully
hast thou dealt with thy seruant O
Lord; but alacke, I neuer thanked
thee for the same, as thou deseruedst.

And therefore am I punished, and
pinched at the verie heart, euen be-
cause I am vnable to answer thy be-
nefits so great and so manifold.

Oh that I could euen but once
worthily, and thoroughly thank thee
for all these things!

But what may proceed from him,
in whom nothing is? An emptie ves-
sell can minister no drinke.

What then shall I doe? Something
I must giue. For it is not lawfull to
come before G O D with an empty
hand; Because the Lord abhorreth
the vngratefull man.

8 Luk. 17.

27.

Oh, that I could finde something
in this world to giue you, that might
be acceptable in your sight!

Oh my Lord, whom in heart I
loue, what would you that I should
giue you?

28.

of the Imitation of Christ.

As for any good thing of mine you neede it not. And why then exact you a gift of mine hands? For riches, none is comparable to you, & yet require you somewhat of me? p Psal. 50. 12

L. That which I demand is euen your selfe wholly. For so it is expedient if you would purchase my fauour.

I will giue grace to you, and you shall shew grace to mee; and so loue shall bee continued betweene vs.

Giue mee your selfe, and you haue giuen euen all.

S. O good Iesus, the fountain of all goodnesse, the fountaine of life, the fountaine of grace, the fountain of sweetnesse, the verie fountaine of aye lasting wisdom, poure vpon mee euen at this instant, I beseech thee, the gift of thy celestiall grace, and teach me to be gratefull, and to giue my selfe before all things wholly vnto you; for this is the dearest thing that I can render.

This I do know, and acknowledge. Therefore receiue mee: lo, I am wholly thine, and all that mine is, is thine.

Onely,

The fourth booke

Onely one thing there is which I cannot giue; & that is my sin, which is mine indeede properly, and therefore not to be imputed vnto thee.

Sin mine is, and all defaults within me are to be ascribed to me only; but glorie, and for all thy benefits thanks, be vnto thee.

But now in calling thy benefits into mind, of many I gather only a few, and those which do most of all moue me, & appeare in my mind. For neither will the time suffer to recite, neither can my thoughts comprehend

9. 1. Cor. 2. them all 9.

9. Because for number they are infinite, for greatnes incomprehensible, 1. Mat. 10. 8 and inestimable for goodnesse. For 1. Lam. 1. 17. bought they cannot bee, because 1. Mat. 25. they are freely giuen 1. And therefore onely thanks bee required for 1. Mat. 4. 10 them, otherwise all shall be taken away, as from that vngratefull one 1. 1. Ioh. 1. 1.

2. 3. First therefore & afore all things, I Col. 1. 15. thanke thee, O Lord my God, creator of all things 1. for making mee 16. 17. a man, after thine image and similitude 1. 27. 2. and for placing mee ouer the 1. 19. 73 workes of thine hands 1. 7. Psal. 8. 6.

7. Sec. This is the great and first benefit bestowed

25. Chap. 25. 209 The first benefit of God on man.
of the Imitation of Christ.

h I bestowed vpon mee, and that of thy
ich meere goodnesse.

re- For I made not my selfe, but thine
h- hands did fashion me^z, they brought
7; mee into this world through my pa- ^{z Psal. 100.3}
its rents^a, whom thy will was, should ^{a Psal. 139.}
serue thee herein. ^{13. 15. &c.}

n- And lo, I am better than other cre-
v, atures, exalted aboue the beasts of
ue the field, and birds of the aire^b, in ^{b Gen. i. 28.}
mage^c, indued with eternall wisdom, ^{Wisd. 9. 2.}
and naturally participate of the light ^{c 1. Cor. 11.}
vncreate, and of the vnchangeable
truth. Wherefore for my being, liuing,
and vnderstanding, I giue thee euer-
lasting praise, wishing and desiring
here withall, that all creatures both in
heauen and earth, may euerlastingly
commend thy glorious and most ex-
cellent name.

I blesse thee, O Father, Lord of
heauen and earth^d, who of nothing ^{d Psal. 97. 1}
through thy onely begotten Sonne ^{Psal. 99. 1.}
Iesus Christ in the holy Ghost, hast
created all things^e.

Yea al things thou hast made, not of ^{e Iohn 1. 1.}
necessitie compelled, but of pure and ^{2. 3.}
speciall loue moued therunto, therby ^{Heb. 1. 2.}
to shew thy power vnto the sonnes of
men,

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f Psa. 145. 4 men f; and by thine inuifible and
coeternall wifedome with thee, thou
hast moft perfectly difpofed this vifible world & Let all thy creatures fub-
g Wifd. 9. 1 ie& in all things to thee^h, & ordained
h Mat. 28. for the vfe of manⁱ, bleffe thee.
18.
i Gen. 1. 28.

For at thy commandement both
raine falleth from heauen, and fruit
springeth from the earth.

The Sunne shineth brightly in the
day time, the Starres giue light by
course in the night.

The fountaines fpring, the rivers
flowe, and fifhes of diuers kindes doe
swimme.

The birds not onely flye, but finge
also, and the goates, the colts, and
Harts, doe fpring vpon the moun-
taines.

The fheepe and other cattell, doe
ioy in good pature, and diuers o-
ther liuing creatures doe run about
the groaues.

The ground waxeth greene, the
fields prosper, and trees of the wood
do yeeld both boughes and fruit.

O Lord, which only doeft won-
k Pfa. 72. 18. derous things^k, euen all thefe are thy
workes.

Another benefit which thou haft
beftowed

Chap. 15. 211 The second benefit of God on man.
of the Imitation of Christ.

bestowed vpon mee, is the mysterie
of incarnation^l, the worke of my 1. Ti. 3. 16.
redemption, the price of our salua-
tion, euen the fruit of thy passion and
death.

Oh great worke of mercie! Oh
worke of most excellent loue^m,
most abiect humilitieⁿ, of most rare
patience^o! No man could merit, nor
Angell procure this thing.

m Rom. 5. 8
n Phil. 2. 5
& c.

o 1. Pet. 2.
21. 22. & c.

The Prophets haue wondered at
it, the Apostles haue seene & taught
it, the faithfull haue embraced it, and
the elect specially doe loue, and call
it into minde.

The due consideration of this be-
nefit stirreth vp good desires, infla-
meth the heart, nourisheth deuotion,
inlighteneth the minde, purgeth the
affection, draweth on to heaven-
ward, withdraweth from the world,
driueth vnto God, and vniteth the
soule with Christ.

This benefit farre excelleth the a-
bone mentioned: yet there is one
which gaue each, and hath bestowed
both of them vpon vs, euen our Lord
Iesus Christ.

For what the better had I been for
my life, if I had not been redeemed
with

The fourth booke

with the precious bloud of my Saut-
our Christ ? ?

p Gal. 1. 3.
13.

Therefore the grace and mercy of
God grew vpon mee, and plentious
q Pl. 130. 7. redemption was made : for the cor-
rupted nature of man without the
aide of God his maker, could neuer
haue been repaired.

O Father of mercies, and God of
r 2. Cor. 1. 3 all comfort r, thou to redeeme thy
f Ephes. 2. 3. damned seruant r, hast giuen thine
t Ro. 8. 32. only Son to the death r.

O wonderfull kindnes of thine to
vs-ward, vnto which, neither the
wit of man, nor the vnderstanding of
u 1. Tim. 3. 16. Angels can attaine u : But alone,
sweete Christ, thou art the begin-
ning and the end of our saluation, &
alone couldest help the miserable, &
damned, thou alone art priue to the
same. For thou didst vouchsafe to ap-
peare vnto the world in the likenes of
x Phi. 2. 5. 6 a most vile seruant x ; and for mortall
y Eccle. 10. 9. wormes y euen of meere pitie recei-
uedst with a willing mind the iudge-
z Gal. 1. 13. ment of a cruell death z.

O good Iesus, thou which art the
fountaine of mercie, the light of aye
lasting glory, the pure glasse (without
a Wil. 7. 26 spot) of God his maiestie a, kinde
mine

Chap. 25. 213 The second benefit of God on man
of the Imitation of Christ.

mine heart with the meditation of
this vnspeakeable benefit bestowed ^b Rom. 5.
vpon me, and vpon all mankinde ^b. 15. 16. &c.

But this, as was the former, is gene-
rall, sufficient to saue all, but not effe-
ctuall in all, by reason of the incredu-
litie and malice of many: howbeit it
saueth, & is profitable to all the elect,
for whose sake all things were crea-
ted; and be (as I may say) created a-
gaine, through thee my Sauour.

O good Iesus, how manifold are
the benefits brought vnto vs by thine
humanitie!

Thou becamest our brother, & flesh ^c Iob 1. 14.
of our flesh ^c, that we might be coun- ^d Gal. 4. 6. 7
ted the children of God ^d, & haue ac-
cesse vnto the Father, through thee ^e, ^e 1 Iohn 2.
the fire of whose displeasure none ^{1. 2}
could quench, but thou alone of ^f Mat. 3. 17
whom himselfe did say ^f: *This is my*
beloued Son, in whom I am wel pleased.
^{Mat. 17. 5.}

Happy is the soule, which earnestly
recordeth, and heartily loueth, and
worthily extolieth the Sacraments
of our redemption; and for them
thanketh thee: and finally depen-
deth vpon thy counsell, more than
vpon her owne sense.

For none is meete to search out, no
wile-

The fourth Booke.

wisedome can reach into this myste-
rie; onely it is the strength of beliefe,
and the purenesse of the heart lighte-
g Mat. 5. 8. ned from aboue, that beholdeth the
same. Oh, blessed is he that is wor-
thie to receiue that by grace, which
the wise of the world could not vn-
derstand by nature h!

h Mat. 11.
25.

O sweete Iesu, the wisdom of the
Father, make mee in the light of
faith to know this great and won-
derfull mysterie of thine Incarnati-
on i, for therein the sweetnesse of
our whole saluation lyeth, and there-
by the rarest friendship that euer
was scene appeareth k, and through
it, the vnsearcheable fulnesse of thy
wisdom, glittereth most glori-
ously.

k 1. Ioh. 3.
26.

Rom. 5. 8.
Rom. 8. 32.

Oh let thy seruant grow on still
in godlines, in the study of well do-
ing, and more and more in the me-
morable secret of thine Incarnation,
make mee acquainted with the my-
sterie of thine holy passion, and draw
mee wholly into the meditation of
thy worke!

The declaration of this loue, and
humilitie, is a wonderfull deepe, and
a certaine celestiaall sea, which may
not

not be soone ouer, wherein do swim
 to and fro the spirituall fishes both
 small and great, which thou hast ta-
 ken within the net of faith.

Wherefore let this thy so great
 loue and sweetnesse, thine so great
 humilitie and kindnesse abide still in
 my remembrance; let it alway re-
 maine in euerie sacrifice of prayer
 that I am to make, and in all mine
 holy exercises let there be somewhat,
 as pleasant frankincense, & delight-
 full spices, for a sweet smelling sauour
 to bee offered vnto God the Father,
 concerning the myserie of thine In-
 carnation and Passion.

Let now then such as thou hast
 redeemed, I say, whom thou hast
 redeemed out of the hand of the e-
 nemie¹, sing out with mee the song 1 Luk. 1. 74.
 of thine heavenly praise, & of inward
 joy together with thanksgiving.

Yea let all the Angels standing a-
 bout thy Throne, fall vpon their fa-
 ces, and worship the Lambe of God,
 who hath taken away the sins of the
 world^m, sayingⁿ:

^m Ioh. 1. 29.

ⁿ Reu. 7. 12

Praise, and glorie, and wisdome,
 and thanks, and honour, and power,
 and might, bee vnto our Lord Iesus
 Christ

Christ for euermore, Amen.

A third benefit not inferior to the former, is the grace of iustification, whereby of thy goodnesse thou hast drawne me vnto repentance, and amendment of life, forgiuing my sins, and giuing me both hope of pardon, and willingnesse to doe well, and to serue thee euermore.

This, after Paul duly had considered, he adhorteth his Disciples to be both thankful for so great a benefit, and also mindefull of the heauenly grace, & to study to shew themselves worthy so spirituall a calling: Brethren, saith he, you see your calling how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. These things I consider in my selfe, who notwithstanding I am contemptible, and vnmeet for this world: yet by thine holy calling am I saued from the shipwrack of the same, to thine holy seruice. And this I ascribe wholly, not vnto any goodnes of mine, but vnto thy prouidence.

For the which I extoll thy goodnes, & blesse thee, euen I say, for calling

Chap. 25. 217 The third benefit of God on man
of the Imitation of Christ.

ling mee graciously, for giuing me a
desire to please thee, for pardoning
all my sins; for putting me vnder thy
sweete yoake, softening mine heart
with the oyle of thy spirit, whom
the world neither knoweth, neither
seeth, nor sauoureth.

O mercifull Iesu keepe me in this
minde, I beseech thee, encrease thy
gifts of grace within mee more and
more, so long as I remaine in this vi-
sible light.

I perceiue right well this calling
of mine is a great benefit, not giuen
to all men, but onely to such as God
the Father hath ordained thereunto;
because it is not in him that willeth,
nor in him that runneth; but in God
that sheweth mercie ^p, that euerie ^p Rom. 9.16
mouth may be stopped ^q, and all the ^q Rom. 3.19
world culpable before God; & that
no flesh should reioyce in thy pre-
sence ^r, nor ascribe any of their owne ^r 1. Cor. 13
vertues or good works to themselves. 29.

For if thou shouldest deale with
mee in iustice, alas, I were then dam-
ned with the cursed spirits in hell.

But of thy goodness, O Lord, thou
hast spared mee, and forgiven my
sins, whereby I am not as the childe

L of

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of perdition. And therefore am I bound to render great thanks vnto thee for so excellent a benefit: and would to God, both in my speech, & in my life, all the daies of my life I might answer my calling.

But Lord, in stead of all thanks, receiue, I beseech thee, my poore seruice, whereby I desire, and indeed am bound to serue thee.

Grant also that the debt of my seruice may proceede from the heart, and finally agree to thy will and honour; and that mine heart bee neuer turned from thy loue, but that both my soule and bodie may alike watch and perseuer day and night in thine holy seruice, euen so long as life is within my bodie, and I haue my wits to remember thee; let thy praise be neuer out of my mouth, nor the remembrance of thy manifold benefits slip out of mine heart.

And if thy seruant shall yet liue manie yeares, either an hundred, or how many soeuer, grant, that I may not proue luke-warme, or abashed at thy seruice, but bee euen so zealous, & so willing to serue thee, as I was at the first houre and day when

Chap. 35. 319 The third benefit of God on man
of the Imitation of Christ.

when mine heart was admonished & confirmed of thee, euen with a pure and whole mind only to follow thee my Lord.

Neither let anie infirmitie or aduersitie hinder my purpose; but euen as now I meane, and purpose in the hearing of thee my God: so I beseech thee giue grace, that what now I haue promised, I may performe.

And although through my infirmitie and faults, this my course shall be broken, as there is no man so righteous vpon earth but he sinneth; yet f 2. Chro. 6. suffer me not to despaire, and to faint; 36. vtterly, but put into my minde forthwith to bow the knees of mine heart, and with much sorrow and teares to offer vnto thee my wofull and wounded conscience to bee healed with the salue of thy mercie, and that my purpose may bee bound more surely than euer it was.

Let mee neuer repent me of this couenant, but still giue thanks, that I haue found such fauour in thine eyes as to bee accepted into thine holy warfare.

Thou canst, O almightie t, and all t Eze. 10. 5.
L 2 mercifull 2. Cor. 6. 28

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Wif. 12. 20 mercifull God, who hast of no-
2. Cor. 13. thing created mee, and foreseest
Gen. 1. 26 the fall and infirmity of man; thou
Ps. 100. 3. art able, I say, and that thou wilt I
beseech thee, forgive the sins which
I haue committed, supply what I
haue omitted, restore what I haue
lost, heale what is sicke, cleanse what
is vncleane, lighten what is darke,
assuage that which swelleth, inflame
what is quenched, repaire that is
broken, recouer that is neglected,
amend what is awrie, make plaine
what is rugged, restraine what is cu-
rious, call home that which wan-
dereth, place what is out of order,
yea and alter the whole state of
my minde, that nothing be wanting
to my former purpose, and let all
occasion of euill, worke for the best
vnto mee, I most humbly desire
thee.

This change is made by the
right hand of God; this is God his
visitation; this is the manifold
conference of the diuine good-
nesse.

In stead of all thanks, accept
the deuout seruice of thine holy
Church where-so-euer, with the
sweete

Chap. 25. 231 The third benefit of God on man
of the Imitation of Christ.

Sweete praises in the whole Court of
heauen.

And let all the Saints from the
beginning of the world, which
through thy grace haue been enligh-
tened and called, yea & all the faith-
full and Christian people which ei-
ther bee in the world, or haue been
afore vs, or shall liue hereafter, let
them I say together celebrate and
praise thy all sweete and glorious
Name, which is aboue all names to
be blessed y.

y Phil. 2. 9.

Let them repeate againe, and a-
gaine with great ioy, repeate all
praises duely and deservedly to bee
said of thy Name: and that so ma-
nie times, as there bee either in the
heauen starres; or in the sea fishes; or
in the earth corners; or in the Bible
letters.

And all this being done, yet must
I say, they haue not praised thy
Name sufficiently, the which I de-
sire to commend euen to the vt-
termost of my strength, and by all
meanes to extoll, vntill I attaine vn-
to those prayes, which now cannot
bee expressed by the voice of mortall
men.

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So that thou see how my Soule,
the greatnesse and excellency
of God thy Creatour and Redeemer
his benefits, the which no creature,
nor all creatures may recompence,
whom hee hath made vnto the praise
and glorie of his eternall and blessed
name^a, who needeth no glory, but
is alone all-sufficient for himselfe; he
that is what hee is^a, is his owne
glorie.

^a Isa. 43. 7.

^a Exo. 3. 14.

The number of his benefits were
so great, that I could not place them
all before mine eyes; and therefore
of a great manie I chose three pre-
cious gifts, euen as the Wisemen
did, which were about to offer to
thee Lord^b, wherein I thought good
to comprehend the rest.

^b Mat. 2. 11.

For euerie benefit of God, if you
marke well, is either of nature, or of
grace, or of superexcellencie; and
whatsoever else is, may fully bee
referred vnto one of these three
kinds.

In the Creation, you haue the be-
nefit of nature; in the Redemption,
the benefit of superexcellencie; in
our Iustification, note the benefit of
grace.

Chap. 27. 123 The third benefit of God on man.
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For all worlds, and for euerie of
them, glorie be to thee, O sacred
Trinitie, one equall Deity, both
before all worlds, now
and for euermore,

Amen.

c Reu. 17.
19.

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